

Spooner Row Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120868
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313774
Inspection dates	17–18 April 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	
School	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lindsey Harding
Headteacher	Mr Simon Wakeman
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Station Road Spooner Row Wymondham Norfolk NR18 9JR
Telephone number	01953 603356
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small four-class primary school, which serves families from the local village of Spooner Row and others nearby. These families come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Children usually enter school with attainment that is broadly average, although in some year groups it is below. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.

The school has gained the Activemark and the Norfolk Healthy School Award in recognition of its work.

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. The friendly ethos, together with support from families and governors, creates an environment where children feel happy, thoroughly enjoy their learning and do well. Staff kindly welcome and include all pupils particularly well which results in a harmonious community where all are sensitive to the needs of others. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with what the school offers, as is reflected in the following comment, 'Well done Spooner Row School for making my children's important school days happy, safe and fun and educating them at the same time'. Parents thoroughly enjoy the weekly assemblies when the pupils' successes and achievements are warmly celebrated.

The headteacher's good leadership has proved effective in introducing new initiatives and procedures. These have resulted in pupils' excellent personal development and well-being and in improving standards. Pupils make good progress and now achieve well. Year 6 pupils typically have reached broadly average standards in recent years, but their progress has not always been as good as it is now. Throughout the school, standards in mathematics, while showing signs of improvement, are lower than in other subjects because pupils are not sufficiently skilled in investigation and solving mathematical problems.

The excellent relationships between staff and pupils create an enjoyable atmosphere for learning. Pupils respect others and respond well to staff expectations. Pupils are very supportive of each other and show great consideration for each other's interests and achievements. Their excellent behaviour is a key feature of their successful learning. Teaching is good because work matches pupils' abilities and pupils gain confidence and feel able to succeed. Pupils who find learning difficult receive good support and the more capable pupils are challenged well. The curriculum is stimulating, particularly when effective links are made between subjects. The successful personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme ensures that pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel well looked after and ask for help if they need it. Most know how to improve their work by responding to teachers' marking, their targets and guidance in lessons.

Effective leadership, management and governance result in the school providing good value for money. There are good systems for checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it could do better. The views of all members of the school community are taken into consideration. Good improvements since the last inspection, together with good leadership from the headteacher, the commitment of staff and governors, and support from parents indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle well in Reception because good links exist between the school and the pre-school and routines are clear and helpful. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and use this well to provide a range of activities which encourage children to have fun when learning. Planning and organisation are good and result in a good balance between children making purposeful choices about their learning and adults directing what they do. Recent improvements have provided more opportunities for children to work outside but the outside area has a narrow range of resources and does not encourage learning through

exploration. Staff gain a good understanding of what children know and achieve through regular observations and assessments, and successfully build up children's profiles of learning. Good management and leadership in the Foundation Stage are based on high aspirations and a clear understanding of what children can achieve. Children's learning and development are good so that, by the time they enter Year 1, nearly all are working at levels expected for their age with some working above these levels.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that standards in mathematics continue to rise by building on pupils' investigation and problem-solving skills.
- Extend the recent improvements for learning outside in Reception.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities, including those who find learning difficult, are achieving well. This is seen in pupils' writing where standards have improved throughout the school. By Year 2, pupils typically reach above average standards. In 2007, Year 2 standards were stronger in writing and reading than mathematics and this is continuing with the current Year 2. Year 6 standards were broadly average overall in 2007 but below average in mathematics. Whilst standards in writing have risen, some recent improvements to teaching and the curriculum are yet to fully impact on the overall standards in Year 6. Last year, the school exceeded its challenging targets in English but did not meet them in mathematics. The standards of pupils working in the current Year 6 are broadly average and in Year 5, they are above.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and develop very positive attitudes to learning. This helps to form a strong foundation for their future development. They arrive in the morning keen to start the day and attendance is above the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have a clear understanding of their place in society and show a strong empathy for others, for example, through their poetry. Their behaviour is excellent and is a key factor in their successful learning where it helps to create an extremely positive school ethos. They play and work together very well and readily make friends. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community and beyond. Older pupils, in particular gain an understanding of different political and cultural issues when they regularly review the news. Pupils know their ideas are taken seriously, and the school council works very well to ensure that pupils have a say in improving the school. This wish to be involved in school activities can be seen clearly when they work in the school garden growing herbs and vegetables. Pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy influences what they eat and the activities they take part in. They have a particularly good understanding of personal safety. Pupils' very good personal and social skills, together with the good progress they make in acquiring basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them well for the next stage of education and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Excellent relationships between staff and pupils are used well to set high standards and expectations. Planning is good. Teachers have a clear understanding of what they want pupils to learn and plan lessons where learning builds systematically over time. Work is well matched to pupils' capabilities; additional challenge is provided for more able pupils and teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to those who need additional support with English and mathematics. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to ask questions that stimulate pupils' thinking and develop their understanding. When teaching is excellent, there is a strong focus on 'active' learning and all are fully involved in the lesson. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils took on the roles in an imaginary company to persuade others to buy their product. Just occasionally, even in lessons that are otherwise good, the pace of learning slows when teachers do not direct the pupils' work closely enough. Generally, teachers use the end of lessons well to assess pupils' progress and consolidate learning. Teachers assess pupils' work and progress well and pupils find their comments in books useful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Staff have raised standards in English and ICT through improvements to the curriculum but have been less successful in mathematics. Strengths in the curriculum include the provision of German at Key Stage 1, French at Key Stage 2 and the peripatetic music lessons available from Year 3. The strong PSHE programme and activities in sports and physical education result in pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay safe and lead healthy lives. Staff have developed plans to ensure a more creative approach to learning through linking subjects but these are not yet part of everyday practice in all classes. Pupils who have difficulty in learning are helped by well-chosen additional activities to help them maintain concentration and learning or to 'catch up'. A good range of popular clubs, visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities help pupils to develop new interests and extend their skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is very good because of the examples coming from staff who provide good role models and personify the expectations set in the school's charter. The level of support in the classroom and supervision at playtimes is good so pupils feel safe and secure. The needs of those who require help with their learning are met well because provision is managed well and staff work patiently with pupils. Very good relationships with parents and good links with outside agencies mean that all are doing their best to help pupils learn. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, reporting incidents, and to ensure health and safety are all secure. Academic guidance is usually good because of recent improvements to monitoring pupils' progress and the setting of challenging targets. However, some younger pupils are not entirely clear about what they are working towards and how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school based on raising standards and promoting pupils' well-being. Work on the latter has been very successful and improvements to teaching and the curriculum have begun to impact positively on standards. Staff share his vision and there is a strong sense of community. Staff take on a variety of management responsibilities successfully, as their strengths are recognised and duties well allocated. Good self-evaluation results in the identification of appropriate priorities for action. Governors have recognised the need to improve the way they monitor and evaluate the success of the school by focusing more closely on these priorities. Recent good improvements to the way pupils' progress is tracked from entry to Year 6, are helping to raise standards.

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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?	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
How well 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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Spooner Row Primary School, Wymondham, Norfolk. NR18 9JR

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

You make good progress and your work is getting better, particularly writing. In Year 6, you reach standards similar to many other children of the same age. I still think you could reach higher standards in mathematics so have asked your teachers to make sure you have more opportunities to investigate mathematical problems. Those of you in Reception do well but I would like you to have a better outside work area.

You thoroughly enjoy school. You attend regularly and arrive on time. Well done! Try to keep this up so you do not miss any lessons. You behave exceptionally well, get on with each other and make good friends. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. I was pleased to hear that you did not think that bullying is an issue at the school but would go to a member of staff if you had any problems. Thank you for inviting me to your school council meeting. You represent the views of others well and are very keen to help others and improve the school.

You enjoy the clubs after school and going on visits to local places of interest. You particularly like the residential visit. You told me that you like using the computers and lessons where you are involved in the learning by doing practical activities. Those parsnips you were growing in the school garden looked very tasty! Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together so that you receive the support you need, particularly those of you who find learning quite difficult.

Mr Wakeman, staff and governors are all helping to improve the school. They are keen to make it even better and have agreed to focus on improving mathematics and the outside area for the Reception children so that you all achieve as well as you can. I know you will respond well to their efforts and try hard. I left with fond memories of your school and wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector