

Alburgh with Denton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121025
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313843
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Claire Valori
Headteacher	Mr Ben Moulton
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	School Road Alburgh Harleston Norfolk IP20 0BW
Telephone number	01986 788678
Fax number	01986 788678

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school, serving a very rural area. At the time of the previous inspection it was a small first school. It has been a primary school for three years. All pupils are of White British background. Far fewer pupils than usual are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is a little higher than average. Children most commonly join the school with the skills, knowledge and understanding expected for their age.

The current headteacher was appointed 18 months ago when only one group of Year 6 pupils had left the school. His appointment followed an unsettled period for the school and two terms with an acting headteacher. More than half the teachers have been in the school for less than two years. No governor has served for longer than three years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school where the pupils personal development is good. The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by the chair of governors. This effective leadership has resulted in several valuable initiatives. They include the introduction of regular assessments and logging the results so that staff can readily see how well each pupil is doing. Expectations of senior staff and subject leaders have increased and they make appropriate contributions to school improvement. However, they are not fully involved in analysing or using assessment information to accelerate the learning of different groups. Governance is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and so is pupil progress throughout the school. Falling standards over the last three years, and recent examples of under-achievement in reading by the end of Year 2, have been causing some parents understandable concern. However, these have been reversed. Current Year 2 pupils are now on track to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics this year. Rates of progress in Key Stage 2 are improving. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach just above average standards in English and science and broadly average standards in mathematics this year. This represents satisfactory achievement in English and science for these pupils given their starting points. Around a half of pupils in Year 4, who joined Year 3 as the school reorganisation began, are making good progress in English and mathematics.

Good pastoral care, described by one parent as 'unsurpassed', contributes to pupils' good personal development. Pupils feel very safe in school and enjoy being there. They say 'everyone looks after each other.' Systems to keep pupils safe are robust and day-to-day care is very good. Academic guidance is satisfactory although, reflecting the school's recent priority, teachers share precise individual targets with pupils only for writing.

At this stage, the school is not using special events or specific programmes of work designed to challenge the most able pupils. The headteacher introduced a system that has successfully ensured pupils receive the curriculum they should. Work is securely planned following national guidance. This ensures that each year's work builds appropriately on the previous year and the curriculum is satisfactory. The school is using suitable programmes to support pupils with learning difficulties in English. Occasionally, however, although improving, work in other areas is not always sufficiently adapted.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching and suitable activities mean that children make steady progress during their Reception Year. Staff work well together to establish consistent routines and expectations which help children to settle quickly.

This is much appreciated by parents. Staff manage children's behaviour sensitively and positively and successfully foster children's confidence and self-esteem. They have a good understanding of the value of young children's learning through their imaginations and practical experience, both in the classroom and outside. Nevertheless, on occasion, children are kept too long as a whole class and opportunities to challenge the most able children are missed. Staff have worked hard and successfully to ensure that plans cover all the required areas through interesting

topics, such as 'patterns'. They are currently developing effective and manageable systems for keeping a close record of each child's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop further the analysis of how well pupils are doing in order to trigger intervention designed to accelerate learning.
- Extend resources and activities specifically designed to increase challenge for the most able pupils and ensure that planning meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties.
- Increase pupils' access to individual targets and their involvement in assessing their own learning.
- Ensure that senior colleagues and subject leaders play a full part in evaluating the school's work and driving improvements.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and improving. Pupils' abilities do vary within groups and from year to year. The 2006 and 2007 national assessments at the end of Year 2 show pupils reaching just below average standards in writing and mathematics and below average standards in reading. This indicates a recent pattern of underachievement in reading that has now been halted. National assessments for Year 6 indicate improved standards in English, mathematics and science between 2006 and 2007. This reflects improvements in class organisation and improved teaching. The oldest pupils make satisfactory progress in English and science, although previous weaknesses in teaching mean there is still some underachievement in mathematics. Children with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress given their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and enjoy school. Attendance is currently above the national figure. Pupils develop effective social skills. They show concern for each other, courtesy to visitors and a good level of interest in their work. They increasingly appreciate that they can make choices, including decisions about what they eat and what they do. They are more willing to embrace physical exercise than healthy eating. This reflects the school's work which has improved sports facilities before focusing as strongly on healthy foods.

Pupils willingly accept responsibilities, such as being a school councillor, prefect or play leader; when given the opportunity they assess their own work seriously. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They have a strong sense of justice and reflect on serious issues, such as voting rights for prisoners, sensibly. Many develop tolerant attitudes and respect for diverse cultures. Their key academic skills combined with the opportunities they have to work co-operatively, provide a sound basis for their future development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, so pupils are well motivated. Improvements to the curriculum mean that teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers routinely use accurate information to modify tasks for most pupils within lessons. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning, especially by supporting those who find learning difficult. The effectiveness of planning for the most able pupils varies because expectations are not consistently high enough for these pupils. Teachers are increasingly empowering pupils by sharing learning intentions, success criteria and writing targets with pupils. These strategies are already contributing to pupils' improved achievement but are still at an early stage of development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality and range of learning activities are satisfactory. Curricular plans ensure a suitable balance between subjects. The improved emphasis on core skills in reading at Key Stage 1 means there is now a consistent focus on meeting pupils' basic needs throughout the school. Popular developments are the school's improved provision for information and communication technology, and sports. These are now good. For example, in addition to plenty of opportunities to use computer software to research and present work, there is an interesting and engaging interactive school website. This offers good opportunities for pupils to check and submit their homework, as well as keeping in touch with each other during the holidays. Pupils appreciate the wide variety of sports and choice of clubs on offer. Enrichment through visits and visitors is satisfactory and makes a suitable contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support are good. Teachers go the extra mile to support those pupils who are most vulnerable socially and emotionally. This includes forging good links with other professionals. The impact is evident in the successful inclusion of these pupils into the life of the school. As a result of the headteacher establishing policies and procedures when he joined the school, systems for safeguarding pupils are robust.

Recently improved understanding of pupils' strengths and needs is helping staff to give pupils useful, individual feedback, both verbally and through marking. Teachers have made a sound start to involving pupils in assessing their own learning but they have just touched the 'tip of the iceberg' of possibilities. Teachers are increasingly using assessment information to modify tasks for different groups of pupils, and this is now satisfactory. Time spent reviewing learning at the end of a lesson, or during the lesson, is not used consistently well to clarify who has achieved what, and determine the next steps. The new special educational needs coordinator has made a sound start to ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties are suitably supported and that work is better adapted.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Recent improvements in the school are down to the headteacher, ably supported by the chair of governors. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and needs. There are adequate systems for reviewing pupils' progress and setting suitably challenging targets to raise standards and improve achievement. This process, combined with improvements to teaching and the curriculum, accounts for the green shoots of improvement evident in pupils' achievement in the school.

Senior staff and subject leaders have recently begun to increase their involvement in improving their subjects and so contributing to whole-school improvement. They have a satisfactory understanding of whole-school issues and how to contribute to whole-school development. The governing body has made a sound start to getting to know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Some are still undertaking training and so are yet to make full use of systems to help them check how well the school is doing.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alburgh with Denton Church of England Primary School, Alburgh, Norfolk, IP20 0BW

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting all of you. A special thank you goes to the children who met me in the library and showed me their work and shared their ideas. Here are some of the good things I found about your school.

- You enjoy school a lot and are good at taking care of each other.
- You work hard and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- You are sensible when you have jobs to do or have positions of responsibility.
- You feel safe in school and know the adults in school care about you.
- You have plenty of opportunities to use computers and digital cameras.
- There are lots of sporting activities to help keep you fit.
- Mr Moulton is doing a good job of making your school even better.

Here are the things I have asked Mr Moulton, the governors and teachers to do to make your school even better.

- To find more activities to make sure work is always challenging for those of you who find learning quite easy.
- To find more special work to help those of you who find learning quite difficult.
- To use targets, like your targets for writing, in more subjects; and to give you more ways of sharing how you feel you are doing.
- To make sure that all the teachers help Mr Moulton check how well you are doing and come up with ideas about how to help you even more.

Thank you again for being so welcoming. I wish you every success in the future.

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector