

# Duchy of Lancaster Methwold C of E Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121046
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	313850
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roderick Passant

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jan Barnes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynne Stabler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Hythe Road Methwold Thetford Norfolk IP26 4PP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01366 728 280
<b>Fax number</b>	01366 728 280

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small rural village school that admits pupils of all denominations from Methwold, neighbouring villages and the nearby United States Air Force base. A new headteacher joined the school at the start of the academic year. Eligibility for free school meals is below average. A third of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, which is well above average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is also above average. Most children join the school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of young children nationally, although the language and communication skills of many young children are less advanced. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at various points during the school year. A minority of pupils arrive relatively late in their primary careers and often they have learning difficulties or disabilities.

## 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 showing clear signs of improvement. Pupils make satisfactory progress and they are on target this year to attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. The school has a calm ethos. Pupils make good progress from the time they enter the school to the end of Year 2, but historically progress slowed across the junior section of the school. Whilst there is a legacy of underachievement, currently pupils make satisfactory and more even progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils who join the school at different times of the year settle in quickly to school routines and make satisfactory progress. The headteacher, relatively new in post, has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done. Under her good leadership, teamwork and a sense of common purpose are developing and this in turn is leading to improvement. There are now demanding targets for pupils' year-on-year progress.

Teaching is satisfactory. Staff know and care for the pupils well. Relationships are good and classroom organisation effective. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use interactive whiteboards effectively to help learning. Standards in speaking are relatively weak because opportunities for pupils to speak are not sufficiently well developed. Pupils tend to write using a narrow range of ideas. Pupils make good progress in their reading skills, but there is not enough emphasis on independent reading for pleasure to extend the quality of their ideas for writing.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is satisfactory. Pupils generally like school. They have satisfactory attitudes to learning but because their independence is not fostered consistently, they do not take sufficient responsibility for their part in the process. The personal, social and health education programme provides good support for pupils' understanding about healthy lifestyles. They have a good understanding of what living healthily is. Behaviour is satisfactory and at times good. Older pupils care for younger ones, for example at meal times. Attendance is satisfactory. Marking of work encourages pupils, but it does not inform pupils enough about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher and governors have high aspirations for the future of the school. Although there is not yet a track record of significant improvement, there are positive signs, such as pupils' more even progress across the school. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and almost all reach the standards expected nationally at the end of the year. Children enjoy learning and behave and play well together, but opportunities for them to take the initiative and show responsibility are limited. Children have a balance of activities across the areas of learning because work is planned effectively. Adults are deployed well and there is a good ratio of adults to children. Because children have many opportunities to speak with adults, they make good progress in their spoken language. Storage requirements restrict the scope of the room with the result that some of the areas are functional rather than providing creative or imaginative contexts for learning. There is effective teamwork in the class and good links with parents and the local nursery, which help to smooth the children's induction to the class. The school is currently working to develop more

accurate assessments of children's progress. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and there is both commitment and potential to improve the provision further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop the role of pupils as partners in their learning by ensuring that they know how to improve their work.
- Encourage pupils' independent learning skills and the opportunities to demonstrate them so that they develop a greater capacity to make decisions and take more responsibility for their own progress.
- Give more emphasis to oral work, drama and reading for pleasure in order to improve pupils' skills in speaking and writing.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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**

Because the numbers are small in each year, one or two pupils' performance makes a significant difference to results and therefore the school's performance data needs to be viewed with caution. Standards at the end of Year 2 were above average in 2007 and were very close to being exceptionally high in 2006. In the 2007 Year 6 tests, standards were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. The school has reviewed the way it teaches science and pupils are now working at the appropriate level for their ages across the school. Standards at the end of Year 6 show year-on-year improvement in the last three years, although standards in speaking and writing are areas for further development. Pupils currently make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach above average standards, and make satisfactory but more even progress in the rest of the school. Helpful support ensures that pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. The school has good tracking systems to monitor all pupils' progress. In the 2007 Year 6 tests, the small number of boys did better than girls, but this is not a trend.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils feel safe and have satisfactory opportunities to contribute to school life through the class and school councils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Cultural development, particularly in preparing pupils for a diverse society is relatively the weaker element. The school has good links with a school in India as part of the work on broadening pupils' horizons. A few pupils lack confidence and have limited expectations of what they can achieve academically. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they know how to take care of themselves. The school prepares pupils adequately for the next step in their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Classroom management is generally effective and teachers have good subject knowledge. They use the interactive whiteboards to focus pupils' interest effectively. Staff know the pupils well and relationships are good. In good lessons, teachers use class discussions to check carefully whether pupils have learned ideas sufficiently well to be able to apply the knowledge and skills taught. Staff are gaining confidence and preparedness to try different approaches to foster pupils' good learning. Teaching in some lessons does not promote pupils' independent learning skills sufficiently well, as reflected in pupils' progress in exercise books. Work is not always routinely pitched at an appropriately demanding level for all pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and promotes pupils' satisfactory progress by giving appropriate emphasis to literacy, mathematics and pupils' personal development. The provision for pupils who find learning difficult enables them to make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. The school has started to develop a new approach to curriculum planning in order to develop meaningful links between subjects. The school is planning to make learning more interesting and enjoyable and to provide a wider range of opportunities for pupils to achieve success. Drama and reading for pleasure are not given enough emphasis to help pupils develop ideas for writing. The school provides French lessons and operates a revision club for Year 6, which helps pupils with the tests. Good links with the local secondary school enhance the provision for physical education. There have been recent trips to places of interest to enhance the curriculum.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral support for pupils. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety and safeguarding pupils are fully in place. The school monitors attendance closely on a weekly basis, which is reported to parents in the weekly newsletter. There are good links with specialist agencies to support pupils and families when required. There is good tracking of pupils' progress so that the school can identify underachievement. The weaker element of this aspect is the academic guidance, because pupils do not know enough about how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and a clear understanding of what needs to be done to take it forward. There is a developing teamwork in the school leading to a sharing of skills and an emerging, reflective, culture. There is a suitable balance between staff being accountable for pupils' progress and the support necessary to achieve this. Staff undertake training and broaden their skills and the headteacher is seeking to develop the leadership and management skills of all staff. The local authority has provided consultant

support to help raise standards. Classroom practice is improving, but the impact of this work is not yet evident in pupils' significantly improved overall progress. Governance is satisfactory. There is a new chair of governors who works closely with the headteacher and a wide range of personal and professional expertise on the governing body to support the school. The governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to school improvement. Governors share the headteacher's high aspirations for the school.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	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**

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Duchy of Lancaster Methwold C of E Primary School, Methwold, IP26 4PP

I enjoyed my visit to your school very much. My particular thanks go to those pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to me. What you had to say was very interesting. My thanks also go to the pupils who made space on their table for me at lunchtime. I was impressed how kind and considerate the older pupils were to the younger ones on the table.

The school is providing you with a satisfactory education. You are making the kind of progress seen in many other schools and you are getting similar results in tests at the end of Year 6. It is good to hear that you feel safe in school and that you feel that you are listened to. Most of you behave well for most of the time in lessons and at playtime. You have a good understanding of what makes a healthy life-style.

I think you can play a bigger part in your own learning. I have asked the headteacher to work with the teachers to make sure they tell you clearly how you can improve your work so that you can aim high and take more pride in what you are doing. I have also asked her to make sure that you develop better skills to learn on your own so that you do not have to rely on adults to help you. Finally, I asked her to make sure that the school encourages you to read for fun even more and to make sure that you have plenty of chances to talk about your work. The school staff know you very well and care about you a great deal. The headteacher and the staff are working hard to make sure the school is going to get even better. With your help, they will be able to do this all the faster.

Sincere good wishes to you all in your future school careers.

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector