

Mundford CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121047
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313851
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard HMI

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	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Rolph
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Hall
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	St Leonards Street Mundford Thetford Norfolk IP26 5ED
Telephone number	01842 878278
Fax number	01842 878999

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Mundford is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average as is the number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. The school provides inadequate value for money.

Overall, standards are below average and achievement is inadequate. The pupils' attainment on entry is in line with national expectations in most areas of learning and they make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the good teaching and the well-planned curriculum. However, this momentum is not maintained. Pupils only make satisfactory progress overall by the end of Year 2 because the quality of teaching is variable. In Key Stage 2, they make inadequate progress, particularly in mathematics, because teaching, learning, curriculum and academic guidance are inadequate. Throughout the school, teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is less secure and this is a contributory factor to the very slow progress made by pupils in this subject. During the inspection, some inadequate teaching and learning was observed in both key stages. Pupils' written work shows that they are not building effectively on earlier learning and this is hindering the progress of middle and higher attaining pupils in mathematics, science and English. In contrast, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they are supported well by teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. This is a caring school where pupils are supported well and feel safe and valued. In class, most pupils behave well. Parents say that their children enjoy school and this is reflected in good levels of attendance and pupils' enjoyment of extra-curricular clubs.

Leadership and management at all levels are inadequate. While the school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis and provides a welcoming environment, leaders and managers are not addressing the issues of underachievement and weak teaching. The governing body and the leadership team do not possess an accurate understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses of the school lie. Consequently, self-evaluation is inadequate and this is impeding the introduction of measures to raise achievement. At present, the school is not demonstrating the capacity to improve without external support.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with abilities similar to children nationally, except in communication, language and literacy where they are below national expectations. During their Reception year, they make good progress in all areas of learning. Most children enter Year 1 having achieved the Early Learning Goals and the most able are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. Teaching and the curriculum meet the children's needs well and keep them actively engaged. They enjoy learning and there is an exciting range of themes planned. These are carefully balanced to ensure effective coverage of all the areas of learning. There is now good provision for outdoor learning, which was a key issue at the previous inspection.

The Foundation Stage leader has a very good knowledge of what is required and keeps good records of pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in writing. Assessments are accurate. There are good relationships with parents who are kept well informed about their children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress throughout the school and especially in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school and particularly teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management so that leaders at all levels monitor standards and the quality of provision rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

In the last three years, pupils have consistently made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics with some making good progress in writing. By the end of Year 2, standards in English are above the national average; in 2007, they were significantly above in writing. Standards in mathematics are average.

In Key Stage 2, pupils make inadequate progress. In 2007, pupils' progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was inadequate overall and exceptionally poor in mathematics where less than half of the pupils made the expected progress in relation to their starting points. Evidence seen during lessons and in pupils' books during the inspection confirms that pupils make inadequate progress in mathematics. Standards in English are much better and are slightly above the national average. However, pupils still underachieve in relation to their results in their Year 2 tests. Standards in science are variable and last year were significantly below the national average. Boys do better than girls in mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils do significantly less well than similar pupils in other schools. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' moral and social development is good due to the expectations and example set by the headteacher and staff. Pupils relate well to each other. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Cultural development is limited by the school's mono-cultural environment and there is little evidence of multi-cultural enrichment around the school. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to school and community life. The school and class councils function well and have recently been involved in the appointment of a teacher. Pupils enjoy much of their school life outside the classroom especially the inter-house sporting competitions and the range of clubs. There is much less enjoyment in lessons such as literacy and mathematics and pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory in weaker lessons. Pupils have a well-developed sense of staying safe both in school and out, and a satisfactory understanding of healthy living. Attendance is above average as a result of children enjoying school and the school's tough stance on holiday leave. Sports activities and the Year 6 outdoor pursuits trip to the Lake District contribute well to pupils' acquisition of team working skills. Inadequate standards in basic skills mean that pupils' future economic well-being is not yet secure.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

There is too much inadequate teaching to enable pupils to achieve their expected rates of progress. Too many lessons in literacy and numeracy are mundane and slow paced. These lessons do not capture pupils' imagination and fail to build on their good experiences in the Foundation Stage. As a result progress, especially for the more able pupils, is not rapid enough. This is particularly acute in mathematics where teachers' subject knowledge is less secure than in other subjects. In weak lessons, pupils lose interest causing some low level disruption. Planning is detailed but is not often executed successfully because it does not challenge pupils at different levels of ability to do their best, even in classes that are grouped by ability. Teachers do not make it clear to pupils what they are to learn in lessons and this leads to confusion and lack of progress. The best marking offers advice on how pupils can improve but this is too variable to be effective. Pupils are not consistently helped to evaluate their own success. The good support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities enables them to make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Curriculum planning has some appropriate local links, such as the Mundford village study in Years 1 and 2. However, it is almost entirely organised in discrete subjects with a disproportionate amount of time given to literacy and numeracy. Opportunities to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills through the teaching of other subjects such as history and geography are limited. The accommodation and school grounds are of good quality with much potential for learning, especially the new information room incorporating a library and a computer suite. However, the information room and computers in classrooms are under-used and there is little evidence of information and communication technology being used to support teaching and learning in lessons. The quality of resources is often inadequate due to the overuse of worksheets, which lack suitable challenge.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Overall care, guidance and support are inadequate. The quality of pastoral care is good but this is not matched by the academic support that pupils' receive. This is a welcoming school. The headteacher cares passionately for the welfare of the pupils and staff and as a result the school is a happy place. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements. Satisfactory procedures exist for monitoring behaviour and the occasional instance of bullying. Staff take great care when pupils are outdoors but entry to the school following break time is sometimes inefficiently organised resulting in too much time being spent on gaining entry. Academic care and guidance are inadequate as pupils are not well informed about their progress. They are not set challenging targets or informed sufficiently about how they are getting on. Staff track attainment but do not measure progress well enough. This means that teachers are not fully aware of how to plan accurately for different levels of ability. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive better guidance and support than other groups of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Although the day-to-day management of the school proceeds smoothly and special needs provision is coordinated effectively, overall leadership and management are inadequate. This is because there is a lack of strategic direction and focused self-evaluation to inform improvement planning. There is no rigorous tracking of pupils' progress throughout the year and no single-minded focus on ensuring that all pupils make the best possible progress during their time at the school. Most subject leaders do not have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in their subject and to give feedback to staff. This was an important key issue in the last inspection and it has not been addressed. The governing body offers insufficient challenge. Governing body minutes reveal that governors are not well informed about standards. They visit the school to monitor provision but their records of their visits are sparse and lack rigour.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Mundford CE Primary School, Norfolk, IP26 5ED

On behalf of my two colleagues, Tricia Pritchard HMI and Richard Perkins, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school. It was good to have time to talk with you in class and around the school and a special thank you to the school council for giving up their time to talk with the team.

There are some good things happening in your school. Your headteacher and teachers look after you well and make sure you are safe and that there is no bullying. When you start school in the Reception class you enjoy all the lessons and learn quickly. There are lots of interesting clubs and you enjoy the team sporting events. You and your parents say you are happy at school.

However, there are things which need to be improved and you can help with this. At the moment you are not working as hard as you could in lessons especially in mathematics. Most of the school council said this was their least favourite lesson. This is because the work you are given to do is often not matched well enough to what you can do. Sometimes you do not behave well enough in lessons. You do not listen to your teachers as carefully as you could and time is wasted because you are not getting on as quickly as you could.

These are the improvements that we would like your school to make and the school will get help to do this:

- We want the school to ensure that you all make faster progress, especially in mathematics.
- We have asked the school to ensure that the lessons planned for you keep your interest throughout the lesson and help you to do your best learning,
- We have asked the school's leaders to ensure that they check your work and progress more closely and visit your classes more often in order to see you and your teachers at work.

With very best wishes for every success in your learning and in life,

Yours sincerely, Julie Winyard HMI