

Hopton CE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121098
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313875
Inspection dates	5–6 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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Shelly
Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Cossey, Mrs Christabelle Whiteley-Tye (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002
School address	Coast Road Hopton-on-sea Hopton Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR31 9BT
Telephone number	01502 730489
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Until recently this smaller than average primary school was a first school. It has a Year 5 class for the first time this year and next year will provide for pupils in Year 6. There are far fewer minority ethnic pupils than is usual. Compared with national figures a very small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than average, although the proportion with a statement of special needs is broadly average. Local employment circumstances mean that families come and go from the area, with the result that a higher proportion of pupils than usual join the school after the Reception year. The previous headteacher left the school in December 2007. The new headteacher has been appointed and takes up her post in April 2008: she is visiting the school each week. Meanwhile the school is being led by two acting headteachers.

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 much appreciated by parents. Pupils enjoy school hugely because they feel utterly safe and secure and rate their teachers highly. The school is gradually moving to primary status and changes in headship have dominated this term, causing parents some understandable concern. Nevertheless, leadership and management are good. Previous strengths in teaching have been maintained. Well-chosen actions, such as reviewing and re-organising the role of teaching assistants, have contributed to pupils' good progress throughout the school. This continued development demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement. The school holds plenty of information about pupils' progress but this is not organised for ready analysis of patterns and trends. Consequently, subject leaders are unable to be fully involved in evaluating and developing their subjects.

The starting point for most pupils is well below expected levels when they begin school. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. The 2007 national assessments at Year 2 show that pupils reach broadly average standards, although mathematics and reading are better than writing. In some classes as many as a third of pupils have joined the school since Year 2. Nevertheless, pupils' work in lessons and in their books shows that they continue to make good progress. Consequently, standards overall are at expected levels in all year groups and more pupils than usual reach higher levels.

The curriculum is planned well to create links between subjects such as drama and writing, or mathematics and science, which maximises learning. Interesting activities combine with good teaching, which consistently features very strong relationships between adults and children to motivate pupils. Teachers give pupils regular, useful feedback. These strengths account for their outstanding behaviour. The school has good systems to ensure that pupils' learning develops as they move up the school and each new year-group is catered for as the school grows.

Pupils develop well as people because of the opportunities the school offers. They develop a strong sense of right and wrong and a willingness to take responsibility and contribute to the school community. They become increasingly aware of differences between people and develop tolerant views. Care, guidance and support for all pupils, including the most vulnerable, are good. Pupils flourish in the school's caring ethos.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching and a good variety of well-chosen and well-planned activities mean that children make good progress during the Reception year. Adults work well as a team. They set children a good example of how to behave and how to communicate. Consistent expectations of their behaviour mean that children soon become accustomed to what is expected of them and ready to learn. They are increasingly confident in sharing their ideas because they feel very secure. Staff have high expectations of children's learning. Occasionally the pace of progress is slowed because children are kept together too long as a whole class.

Teachers and teaching assistants keep a close eye on how well children are doing and use this information successfully to plan for each child to build on existing skills and knowledge, whatever their starting points.

What the school should do to improve further

- Organise information about pupils' progress so that it is easier to see and analyse patterns and trends in how well pupils are doing.
- Ensure that subject leaders initiate and evaluate developments in their subjects more often.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall for pupils throughout the school. This is because teachers know pupils very well and carefully plan the next steps for different groups of children, whatever their starting points. Current Year 2 pupils are on track to reach broadly average standards in reading, above average standards in mathematics and below average standards in writing. Evidence from pupils' books and teachers' records indicates that good progress continues between Years 3 and 5 and pupils reach the standards expected for their age. The school is good at increasing the proportion of higher attaining pupils as they move through the school. This pattern begins at the end of the Reception class and continues between Years 1 and 5.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. As a result of the school's efforts, punctuality has increased this term; attendance is improving and is currently just above average. Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good in lessons and around school. Pupils of all ages report that there is no bullying and are justifiably proud of the respect they show each other. They undertake roles such as school councillors, 'playground buddies', monitors, librarians or house captains, conscientiously and seriously.

Pupils grow to realise that they have choices, for example about what they eat and do, which affect their health and welfare. Many develop respect for different cultural traditions and are receptive to ideas different from their own, although they tend to associate these to a greater extent with countries other than Britain. Good social skills combined with their key academic skills and knowledge provide a good basis for the next stage of their education and future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning have many strengths. Relationships between adults and children are very strong. This means that pupils want to learn, so they concentrate and cooperate extremely well. Because teachers use their good knowledge of pupils effectively to plan for differing needs within the class, all pupils remain highly motivated. Occasionally, even though satisfactory, the pace of a lesson slows because teachers keep pupils working too long as a whole class. Evidence from books indicates that marking is helpful, and pupils are familiar with the purpose of the lesson and their individual learning targets. Pupils are regularly involved in assessing their own learning through a variety of strategies. Expectations of neatness and spelling are less consistent. There is some outstanding teaching, which is characterised by a huge sense of fun, brisk pace and highly successful links between subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Teachers successfully lay plans to ensure that pupils make consistent progress from year to year as the school moves towards full primary status. Pupils' needs are recognised through an emphasis upon key literacy and numeracy skills. There is good provision for personal development, which is successfully woven through most lessons as well as given discrete time. The increased linking of subjects through topics such as 'India' is successfully contributing to relevance, enjoyment and progress for pupils. A suitable range of clubs and special events enriches the curriculum. Visitors to school particularly support pupils' spiritual and cultural development. All pupils benefit from the wide range of information and communication technology resources, such as digital photography, interactive whiteboards and computers. This technology is used particularly effectively to support the most able pupils. The school also makes very good use of local resources through the environmental 'Forest School' work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral care is very good because individual pupils are well known by staff and pupils greatly appreciate adult support. They feel safe and are very confident that staff will deal effectively with any concerns. Pupils who have greater difficulties with learning are well supported with good links to outside agencies if required. There are secure procedures for child protection and safeguarding pupils that meet national requirements satisfactorily. Everyday care in the classroom is very good. Pupils' academic progress is checked closely by teachers and, on a day to day basis, pupils are well involved in understanding how well they are doing. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, appreciating the care and education given to pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This term, the acting headteachers have developed teamwork among staff, broadened the curriculum and instigated several strategies that have significantly contributed to pupils' well-being. Examples include greater staff involvement in determining school priorities; greater pupil involvement in assessing their learning and sourcing funding to develop a string orchestra. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development but action has been constrained by their teaching commitments.

Effective procedures check pupils' progress and are used to set challenging targets. Nevertheless, information is not used fully to analyse the impact of the school's actions on the achievement of different groups of pupils. Subject leaders have made an enthusiastic start to developing their subjects. However, most are new to their roles and have yet to analyse information about how effectively their subject is taught. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. They have good systems in place for keeping themselves well-informed and holding the school to account.

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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	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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

7 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hopton Primary School, Hopton-on-Sea, Norfolk NR31 9BT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited recently. A special thank you goes to the children who met us in the library or the 'Green' room, showed us their work and shared their ideas with us. We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school. Here are some of the good things we found.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You enjoy school a lot and we were very impressed by how well you behave in lessons.
- You are extremely sensible and kind to each other which helps everyone to feel very happy.
- You know that your teachers and teaching assistants care about you a lot so you feel very safe and secure
- Your teachers make learning fun because they choose really interesting activities for you.
- You have plenty of chances to use technology.
- Mrs Whiteley-Tye and Mrs Cossey have helped make the school even better this term.
- The governors do a good job of helping them.

We have asked the new headteacher to make your school even better by working out what works best in helping you learn. We have also asked the teachers to become even more involved in helping her with this.

We hope you always enjoy learning so much.

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector