

# Earsham CofE (VA) First School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121114
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	313882
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Messer

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	69
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Gill Aspinall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Payne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	School Road Earsham Bungay Suffolk NR35 2TF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01986 892557
<b>Fax number</b>	01986 893634

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–9
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 January 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	313882

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This village school is much smaller than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils from Traveller families attend the school when in the area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. Children's attainment on entry to the school is average. A large proportion of pupils transfer to this school after the normal time of admission into Reception often into Years 2 and 3. The school has a Healthy Schools award.

## 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. Pupils make good progress and attain standards that are above average. The school has been successful in managing a difficult period caused by a succession of long-term staff absences so that any adverse effects on pupils' learning have been kept to a minimum. It is now entering a more settled period. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher promotes a strong sense of teamwork and gives clear direction to the work of the school. The highly skilled team of teaching assistants is deployed exceptionally well. The team is used in a flexible way so that pupils gain maximum benefit from their support. Pupils receiving extra literacy support make particularly good progress. The overwhelming majority of parents are delighted with the education provided for their children. One comment from a parent whose child moved to the school in Year 1 was typical, 'The improvement in her work has been fantastic. It is an excellent school.' The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies the most important priorities for improvement. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school has good capacity to improve further.

Teaching and learning are good. A quiet, purposeful learning environment typifies classrooms. Learning is productive. Teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance. Pupils are well motivated and work hard in lessons. They are eager to learn and keen to succeed. They develop a good range of key skills that prepare them well for the next phase of their education.

A great deal of data is collected about the progress of each individual pupil. This is used well to identify any pupils who may require extra support in their learning.

However, it is not always presented clearly enough for everybody to see precisely how much progress pupils make. The school has recognised this and has plans to introduce a computerised assessment and recording system. The curriculum is satisfactory and fully meets statutory requirements. There are exciting highlights such as educational visits and the Healthy Eating Day. However, there is considerable scope to link subjects together to develop themes that capture pupils' interest and make learning even more exciting.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. However, their understanding of the multi-cultural nature of our society is under developed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They are courteous, friendly and sensitive to the needs of others. They have a good understanding of their responsibilities to the community and wholeheartedly support charitable fund-raising events. Care guidance and support are good. Pupils receive particularly good guidance about how to look after themselves, eat balanced diets and lead healthy lifestyles. The school is committed to being fully inclusive and is especially good at caring for vulnerable pupils, those with emotional difficulties or personal issues. This particular strength, and the small size of the school, attracts parents who live at some distance from the immediate area and is one of the main reasons for high levels of inward mobility.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Teaching is good and children learn rapidly. Skilled classroom assistants work closely with the class teacher to establish effective routines that help children to become confident learners. The school uses an excellent programme that introduces children to letters and the sounds they make. Systems to develop early reading and writing skills are well established and the pace of learning is fast. Children quickly gain confidence in their ability to use their phonic

skills to build words. Consequently, children get off to a flying start in reading and writing. There is also an appropriate emphasis on numeracy and children enjoy exploring shapes, patterns and numbers. Technology is used well to support learning, especially digital photography to illustrate activities. In story building activities, models are used to set the scene, as for example, in the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. These include miniature photographs of children and their friends so that they can include themselves in their stories.

School staff visit children in their homes before they start school. This helps to develop a good partnership in learning between home and school. It also contributes to the children's self-confidence and their readiness for learning. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the Reception year most attain standards that are above average.

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

- Devise clearer systems to measure the progress pupils are making through the National Curriculum.
- Make better links between subjects to make the curriculum more exciting.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of society.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All groups of pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make good progress. Children settle happily into the Reception class where they achieve well and attain standards that are above average. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and by Year 2 attain standards that are well above average. The results of national assessments at Year 2 in 2007, confirmed that standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The continuity of pupils' learning has been interrupted by staff absence and this, together with the high proportion of pupils who transfer in to the school, has affected achievement in Years 3 and 4. Some of the newcomers make excellent progress whilst others, who have not benefited from the school's rigorous phonics regime, do not make as much progress due to gaps in their prior learning. Overall, most pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and standards are above average in literacy and numeracy.

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

### **Grade: 2**

An overarching feature of pupils' personal development is the confidence they gain. This is fostered by much praise and encouragement. Pupils know that they are successful learners and this feeling of being able to succeed underpins further effective learning. Pupils are polite and well behaved. They help each other in lessons and are good at working collaboratively. They are confident that there is no bullying. Older pupils take turns to organise playground games and help those in need of friendship. Attendance is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Relationships between teachers, pupils and parents are excellent and make a strong contribution to effective learning. Another key strength of the teaching is the way in which effective routines and procedures have been established. This helps pupils to be confident in knowing exactly

what is expected of them. Teachers have a good understanding of what pupils know and what they need to learn next. They set challenging work, especially for the more able pupils. Pupils report that work is neither too hard nor too easy but 'just about right'. Teachers pay close attention to detail and encourage high standards of presentation. The pace of lessons is generally brisk but there are occasions when teachers conduct over-long, whole class question and answer sessions. This restricts opportunities for pupils to be more actively engaged in their learning. Work is marked frequently but the quality of marking is inconsistent. The best gives pupils good guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is developing well and includes exciting highlights, such as hatching chicks in the classroom and watching their development. It also includes giving pupils a flavour of learning French, German, Spanish and Italian languages. Personal, social and health education is well planned. An adequate range of visits, visitors and after school clubs enriches learning. There is insufficient emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of our society. A good start has been made on making links between subjects but the school has correctly recognised that there is further work to be done on developing themes that make learning even more relevant and exciting.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care and guidance are excellent. All staff know each individual pupil extremely well so any sign of unhappiness is noted quickly and dealt with sensitively. Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet requirements. Academic guidance is mostly good but pupils' individual targets are not always sufficiently challenging. Provision for pupils who need extra help with their learning is good. Support is pitched at just the right level to help them succeed and so they make good progress and develop good self-esteem. Parents whose children have joined the school in classes other than Reception comment favourably on how quickly their children become part of the school family and how well they are helped to succeed.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher plays a key role in the school's growing success. Parents recognise this: 'The headteacher sets the tone and makes sure that all children flourish.' The leadership team is well organised and all leaders make a strong contribution to the school's development. The performance of each individual pupil is analysed closely and every effort is made to ensure that they achieve success. School governors monitor the work of the school closely. The headteacher and governors ensure that teachers and support staff receive good in-service training. As part of this programme, teachers and their classroom assistants, frequently visit other schools to capture elements of good practice that they can use themselves. Finances are managed well. Communications with parents are good and the school's website is particularly informative. The school suffers from extremely cramped accommodation but efficient organisation and careful use of limited space make sure that daily routines operate smoothly. Plans for a new school building have been prepared but the work is overdue.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	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	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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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>	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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

16 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Earsham First School, Earsham, Suffolk, NR35 2TF

What a lovely school! Mrs Thompson and I thoroughly enjoyed my short visit. Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful.

There are so many good things about the school. Firstly, you are all so friendly. You are very sensible and well behaved. Your headteacher gives good leadership. All the grown ups work hard to help you with your learning and want to make absolutely sure that you all do as well as you possibly can. You make good friendships. I was particularly impressed with the way you welcome newcomers into the school family. Quite a number of children join your school in different year groups and you soon make them feel at home. You work and play happily together and enjoy learning new things. You always do your best and so you make good progress. You are good at reading, writing, and mathematics. You do some exciting things, like hatching the chicks in the classroom and pretending to be refugees in the Second World War. You know how to stay safe and look after yourselves. You have a good understanding about how to eat a balanced diet and the need to take regular, vigorous exercise. I know that you all do your best to support recycling and energy conservation. The new wormery looks lovely and those worms are certainly being well looked after so that they can help to make good compost. The morning 'Wake and Shake' sessions are great and help to get your brains in gear.

I know that Mrs Payne and the teachers would like to link subjects together more to create even more exciting projects and I agree that this is a good idea. Also, I think that it would be helpful if you knew more about all the different cultures and groups that enrich our society. Mrs Payne is also planning to use a new computer system to keep track of the progress you make in literacy and numeracy. This should help everybody to see clearly exactly how quickly you move forward in your learning.

I wish you every success in the future.

John Messer

Lead inspector