

Yaxham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121129
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313888
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	76
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Chase
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra May Nightingale
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Norwich Road Clint Green Yaxham Dereham Norfolk

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural primary school draws pupils mainly from the local area although a number of pupils from outside the catchment area travel some distance to attend the school. Although there are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, at present, no pupils are in the early stages of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and medical or emotional needs is well above average as is the percentage with statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage varies significantly from year to year but, overall, is well below national expectations. Almost half the pupils in Year 1 through to Year 6 joined the school in the last eighteen months which is a higher proportion than is found nationally. The school has been awarded Activemark and National Healthy School status.

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 that is popular within the local area. It is well led and managed and staff work together extremely well to ensure that each pupil's needs are met. Staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The improvements since the last inspection, especially in the involvement of governors and teachers in subject and school management, ensure good capacity for future improvement. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the care the school takes of their children and the support they receive. Parental comments refer to, 'a very approachable staff'. The creative organisation of classes and good additional support enables pupils to learn well and celebrate their successes. As a result, pupils are confident, behave extremely well and show great respect towards adults and their peers. It is a tribute to the adults' skills, and the support of their peers, that pupils with emotional or behavioural needs rapidly improve their social skills.

In the 2008 national tests for eleven-year-olds, the unvalidated data shows that standards in English, mathematics and science were higher than in 2007 although slightly below national averages. Standards were below average at the end of Year 2. Almost all pupils, including the most able as well as those who find learning difficult, make good progress from their starting points. This is because teaching and learning are good. Teachers skilfully plan lessons that meet the needs of the different ages within each class. Pupils work hard, often working together with a real sense of purpose. However, the oldest pupils' written work is often untidy and many do not take enough care with their handwriting.

Teachers are conscientious in meeting the curricular needs of each year group and the range of abilities, ensuring pupils learn the skills they require in each subject. Suitable topics and themes enable pupils to develop these skills in purposeful ways. The curriculum is rightly being developed to become even more creative to reflect pupils' interests and aspirations. Pupils learn French or Spanish and enjoy the support of students from Europe through the University of East Anglia. The school supports a pupil's schooling in Gambia and learn how his life differs from theirs. However, they have too few opportunities to learn about the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity within our society.

Good systems for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education contribute to the pupils' responsible attitudes towards their personal health and safety, their duties in school and care for others. Pupils respond well to the good advice given to them in lessons and are eager to improve their learning. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers give written advice to help pupils improve their work through, for example 'two stars and a wish', although this is not a regular feature of all teachers' marking. This means pupils have nothing to refer to in order to evaluate and improve their work or measure their progress over time.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a flying start to their education. Inspirational teaching ensures they make outstanding progress across all areas of the curriculum. A striking feature of the teaching in Reception is the skilful way that staff involve children in their own learning. Children each have a large book in which they, their teachers and parents record their achievements. Staff attach labels to the entries as children achieve steps towards their goals and record the next steps in learning. Staff and children plan how these will be achieved. The

root of teachers' planning is the skills children need to acquire but activities are planned, with suggestions from the children, to reflect immediate interests and needs. As a result, there is a sense of shared learning where children delight in exploration, investigation and in teaching their teachers new things!

Children's personal, social and emotional development is rapid because of the exemplary care and respect they receive from the staff. Each child develops high levels of responsibility towards their personal care, including eating healthily and staying safe. Children work and play cooperatively and take good care of each other. High quality teaching ensures children rapidly acquire the skills they need. Their progress in linking sounds and letters, for example, outstrips that of most other Reception-aged children. Children make excellent progress and several children are on track to exceed the learning goals for the Early Years Foundation Stage by the end of the academic year. Excellent liaison with parents results in children often continuing their learning, unprompted, at home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Support pupils to take more responsibility for the planning and evaluating their learning and the setting of their own targets for improvement.
- Extend pupils' understanding of the cultural and ethnic diversity within our society.
- Improve the handwriting and presentation of written work of the older pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In the 2008 national assessments for seven-year-olds, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below average but pupils exceeded their targets for reading, writing and mathematics and achieved well. Pupils currently in Year 2 make good progress from their low starting points. Pupils in Year 6 attained slightly below average standards overall in 2008. They achieved well in English, mathematics and science. Almost all pupils have made good progress towards their challenging targets. Throughout the school, the more able pupils also make good progress because they have plenty of challenge. Pupils who have social, emotional or behavioural challenges make very good progress because of the school's effective commitment to inclusion and high quality pastoral guidance and support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school because each one of them knows they are safe, well cared for and that their efforts are valued. Pupils help and support each other and take their duties as school councillors or playground buddies seriously. Pupils are thoughtful and respond well to the needs of others contributing to a range of charities. Their very good moral and social development is clearly demonstrated in their outstanding behaviour. They contribute well to the local community, taking part in village events such as the scarecrow competition and local inter-school events. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe and are clear what constitutes a healthy diet. They enjoy their physical education lessons and the additional sporting activities on offer. They develop the skills they need for their future economic wellbeing well although they do not have sufficient opportunities to apply these to real life situations such as costing and planning school trips.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

One of the strengths of the teaching throughout the school is the attention that is given to individual pupils, whatever their needs or abilities. This ensures that pupils who require additional support receive it at levels which helps them make good progress and promotes their self-esteem. Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and explain things well. They encourage pupils to work together and learn from each other. Regular evaluation of pupils' learning during lessons enables teachers to adapt their planning to consolidate or extend learning. Pupils in Year 1 have plenty of involvement in planning their learning and identifying their next steps. This ensures that they are highly motivated and learn rapidly. While other teachers provide pupils with choices within their lessons or for homework, pupils in Years 2 to 6 do not have the same input in planning their learning. This misses opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and pursue their own interests in depth. Occasionally, teaching does not always expect enough of the way pupils present their written work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school follows statutory guidance for planning the curriculum in order to accommodate the mixed aged classes. There are effective links between subjects within topics or themes that help to make learning relevant and interesting. At present, the topics are organised in cycles with the flexible age group arrangements. The curriculum is being developed appropriately to enable teachers to plan more flexibly, based on the skills pupils need to gain. This is to ensure opportunities are provided to involve pupils in the planning. There is a good range of additional activities and visitors to school, such as the Guild of Suffolk Weavers, which enhance the curriculum. Older pupils have a residential visit to an activity centre, which contributes effectively to their personal development. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. Resources are used well and pupils have good opportunities to use ICT within other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school meets all the government requirements for safeguarding pupils and provides exemplary pastoral care for the pupils. New pupils are made very welcome by both staff and pupils. Very good links with parents further enhance the wellbeing of the pupils. Measures to improve attendance have been successful. The school makes good use of outside agencies and other professionals to help them support pupils. All learners, including those most at risk, are supported well. New systems for tracking pupils' progress against the expected levels for each year group identify when pupils need additional support. However, these do not clearly identify the achievements of pupils who, because of their individual learning needs, take longer to achieve the next levels. Teachers set pupils appropriate targets for improving their English and mathematics, which are shared with parents. The targets for pupils with specific learning or emotional difficulties are precise and challenging but achievable. However, day-to-day written guidance to remind pupils how to improve their work or challenge them to extend their learning is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school well. She is fully involved in the teaching and learning throughout the school, enabling her to identify and respond to the strengths and developmental needs of the staff and pupils. Each teacher has suitable management responsibilities and contributes fully to the school's realistic plans for improvement. Teachers lead the planning effectively for their subjects and are increasingly monitoring pupils' progress. Adults know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well, and are fine-tuning the tracking of pupils' progress to help them evaluate the impact of the good additional support more effectively. Governors are well informed about developments in the school and several are involved in the monitoring process. The school fosters strong links with parents, the local community and other local agencies, including the local cluster of schools. The school maintains strong links with the local church and is effectively involved in curriculum partnerships with local high schools. Links with European and worldwide communities are sound but leaders have not yet initiated steps to develop links with contrasting communities in the United Kingdom.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

13 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Yaxham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Norwich Road, Clint Green NR19 1RU.

Thank you very much for your friendliness and help when I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you all. A special thanks to those of you in the school council who gave me your views. Your parents and carers told me that the school takes excellent care of you. I agree, because you know that you are safe and enjoy school. I was very impressed with your excellent behaviour. Your school is providing you with a good standard of education. Your teachers do a good job in helping those of you who sometimes find it difficult to settle down to work to become good members of your school community. I was very pleased to see how well you take care of each other and respect each other's views. You all help make your good school a happy and friendly place. Well done to you all!

You make good progress during your time in school, even though some of you find learning difficult. This is because you have good teachers who help each one of you learn well. Those of you in the youngest class have an excellent start to school. I love the way you help your teachers plan your learning and I enjoyed seeing how much you enjoy finding things out. Just be careful how you use those magic beans, won't you? I have asked every teacher to help you all become more involved in planning what you learn. I also want them to make sure that you all know how well you have done and what you need to do next when they mark your work. You can then take their advice to help yourselves improve even more quickly. I was a little disappointed when I looked at older pupils' work because some of you do not take enough care over your handwriting and your work is untidy. You should take as much pride in your written work as you do over your computer-generated writing. Please make a real effort to make your books special.

Your school is well led and managed. Your headteacher makes sure that you have the extra help some of you need and that all of you have interesting things to learn. You have very good links with the village and nearby schools, and plenty of clubs and visitors help make learning fun. I know you enjoy learning French and Spanish particularly through your overseas visitors from the University of East Anglia. I have asked your teachers to help you find out more about the lives of people in other parts of the United Kingdom and the things that are happening in our country. This will help you all become good citizens as you get older. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Best wishes

Judy Dawson

Lead Inspector