

Anthony Curton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121138
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313892
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Matthews

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Michael Chesher
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Senior
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2002
School address	The Chase Walpole St Peter Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE14 7NG
Telephone number	01945780121
Fax number	01945780872

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Anthony Curton is situated in a rural West Norfolk community. It is smaller than most primary schools and serves the local villages. An above average percentage of pupils is eligible for free school meals and there is a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and none has English as an additional language. The school receives significant support from the local authority through the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) to help it raise standards. The school has breakfast and after-school clubs. It has a Sure Start Kitemark Quality Assurance award and has recently received Healthy Schools status. Recent teacher turnover has been high. A new headteacher was appointed a year ago.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Anthony Curton is a good school which has improved well since the last inspection. Parents are very positive about the quality of education it provides and the way pupils' are enthused by their own and others' successes'. Under the very strong leadership of the new headteacher, who is modest in her assessment of the school's effectiveness, it demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. This is a school where every child does matter and the school works incredibly hard to ensure every pupil is well cared for and fully included in all aspects of school life.

Effective leadership and management are the cornerstone of the school's good provision. Since her appointment, the headteacher has worked very effectively with her deputy, and together they have transformed many aspects of the school's provision. The school now has a settled staff, a strong team spirit and a united confidence that it can make things better for the pupils. The ISP initiative has helped the school to develop rigorous assessment and tracking systems, and staff have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses because of its improving self-evaluation procedures. Its priorities for future development are well chosen and accurate and take account of the views of the wider school community. Governors have a broad range of skills which they use effectively to support and challenge the school's work.

From a low starting point in Reception, pupils achieve consistently well as they move through the school. Regular assessment of pupils' work enables teachers to plan lessons that have the maximum impact on learning. Any underachievement is quickly identified and steps taken to provide focused support. Standards for this year's Year 6 show a clear improvement on the previous year, particularly in English, and are now broadly average. However, the school has rightly identified raising standards further as an ongoing focus. Pupils also make good progress in singing and art. They are using computers increasingly to support their work in other subjects.

The quality of teaching is good and pupils develop very positive relationships with their teachers and each other that help to promote their strong personal development. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and this has a positive impact on the rate of their learning. The needs of different abilities are met by very careful planning and well-focused use of the knowledgeable teaching assistants. Pupils find their ISP targets helpful in identifying the next steps in their learning but have too few opportunities to discuss how well they have done in lessons, and to share their successes and concerns with their teachers. The curriculum is good and enhanced by popular after-school activities and a range of visits and visitors. The quality of the curriculum for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding, enabling these pupils to make the same good progress as their peers. Teachers' marking is supportive, but does not always give pupils advice about how to improve their work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On entry to Reception, the children's skills, knowledge and understanding are well below expectations for four-year-olds. Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage is good and leads to staff providing a secure, challenging and exciting environment where children learn quickly and happily because of the well-planned provision and consistently good teaching. All staff work very successfully to develop the children's language skills, with the early phonics teaching being particularly effective. Resources are carefully chosen to ensure the learning is

thoroughly reinforced. Children collaborate well because of the strong emphasis placed on the development of the children's personal and social skills. Children's overall attainment at the end of Reception is still below expectations except in reading, writing and mathematical calculations where they make very good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more pupils reach national standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to evaluate their learning.
- Ensure teachers' marking has a greater impact on the standards of pupils' future work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well as they move through the school and standards are average overall by Year 6, showing a clear improvement on last year. The proportion of higher achieving pupils is also increasing because of improved teaching and greater challenge. Writing is a priority and focused work in this area is having a very positive impact on pupils' attainment through the school. Standards in reading in Years 1 and 2 are also improving because teachers are building well on the very good start these pupils make in Reception. Pupils enjoy the challenge of learning a foreign language. In some classes they are making very good progress in acquiring basic vocabulary and conversation skills. Pupils are also achieving well in art, music and sport because of increasing opportunities for them to take part in these activities, and the effective use of specialist teaching. Pupils make good progress in information and communications technology (ICT) with some high quality work observed involving spreadsheets and design programs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school a great deal and their attendance shows a good improvement from the last inspection. Pupils feel valued as individuals, relationships are strong and behaviour is good. Older pupils show good care and support for others. Pupils feel safe and show a good understanding of the importance of keeping healthy in their choice of menus at lunchtime and their involvement in the sporting clubs.

They make good progress in developing personal qualities and skills that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community and which prepare them well for the world of work. This includes the school council, which is very involved in helping to improve the school and raise money for charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are consistently well planned and adapted to meet the needs of the full range of pupils' abilities, so that all pupils make good progress towards their individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour have a real impact on their pace of learning. Teachers encourage pupils to take an active part in lessons and pupils respond enthusiastically to questioning and their 'talking partner' activities. Teaching assistants play a vital part in this learning. Their skilled support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities ensures these pupils are fully included in lessons and make good progress. Teachers' marking is supportive, but because pupils do not have time to follow up suggestions, its impact is less effective. Teaching in Year 6 is particularly effective because pupils openly assess their own learning with the class and this enables the teacher to plan more accurately for follow-up lessons. However, this strategy is under-developed in other classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a strong emphasis on raising pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics, which is proving to be successful. The development of a more creative curriculum is encouraging good progress. For example, through careful planning, pupils' art and writing skills are being developed to support their work in other subjects. Special curriculum occasions, such as art weeks and science days, are very popular with the pupils and lead to some high quality work, particularly from the gifted and talented pupils. There is outstanding provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's improved personal, social, health and citizenship programme has helped it to achieve the Healthy School Award recently. Good improvements have taken place in ICT, which is used effectively in different subjects. The school provides a very good range of clubs including sport, music, art and foreign languages. The curriculum is enriched by trips, including a residential for pupils in Year 6, visitors and the teaching of a modern foreign language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff are strongly committed to pupils' welfare and are particularly good at preparing children for school, enabling them to settle quickly. Child protection and health and safety procedures meet requirements. Parents rightly praise the quality and effectiveness of the support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has developed good procedures for identifying vulnerable pupils and those in danger of underachieving. Well-focused support is provided to address their needs.

For example, 'catch up' programmes have had a dramatic impact on selected pupils' literacy skills. Pupils with particular gifts and abilities are well challenged in lessons and new clubs are being set up to extend their skills further. Assessment procedures are effective. Pupils are very aware of their individual learning targets and how these help to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She has successfully created an ethos of high expectations where everyone feels cared for, respected and valued. The newly introduced management systems ensure staff know what to do and how to do it and are having a very positive impact on the quality of the school's provision. The school's improved self-evaluation procedures accurately highlight developments that will be most effective in helping it to improve further. Performance management is now rigorous and well informed by regular monitoring of teachers' lessons by senior staff. Staff development is accurately matched to individual needs and the school priorities. The coordination of the work for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding and very good use is made of links with

outside agencies and other schools to support this provision. The higher than average financial carry-forward into this year is earmarked for the building of the new classroom and group room. Governance is good and improving as the school is making increasing use of governors' expertise.

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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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Anthony Curton CofE Primary School, Wisbech PE14 7NG

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and watching you working with your teachers. It was good to speak with your teachers about how well you do at school. We especially enjoyed your singing with the choir in assembly. It was fascinating to hear your views about how the inspection had gone and we hope we gave some interesting answers when interviewed by the Year 6 newspaper team. We think that you and your teachers have worked very hard together to improve your school and make it such an exciting place to visit. Your school is a good school and we have shared some ideas with Mrs Senior about some things that we feel can make it even better.

What we liked most about your school

- Your headteacher is doing a really good job.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants look after you very well and really help you improve your work.
- You have lots of opportunities to say how the school can get better.
- You really enjoy school, behave well and have very good relationships with each other and your teachers.
- Those of you who find work difficult are getting the right sort of help and you use it well.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you do even better in your reading, writing, mathematics and science work.
- Make sure that when teachers mark your work, they tell you more about how to improve it.
- Give you more time in lessons to talk about your learning and particularly the things you are finding difficult to understand.

Andrew Matthews

Lead inspector