

St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School, Lopham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121149
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313898
Inspection date	8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary Lawson
Headteacher	Mr Richard Ogilvie
Date of previous school inspection	19 April 2005
School address	The Street North Lopham Diss IP22 2LR
Telephone number	01379 687253
Fax number	01379 687253

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector over one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The following areas were inspected in detail: the progress that pupils make at each key stage; how effectively the curriculum is planned to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes; what strategies the school is using to sustain its monitoring and evaluation process in the current temporary leadership situation. Teaching, learning, pupils' personal development and the systems to provide them with academic guidance were also inspected. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report. Observations of lessons and pupils' work, discussions with the acting and assistant headteachers, staff, governors and pupils, the parental questionnaires and school self-evaluation documents provided inspection evidence.

Description of the school

This is smaller than average village school. Attainment on entry to Reception is broadly typical for children of this age. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and none is at the early stages of learning English. The school experiences an above average level of pupils leaving or joining during their school career. The school is in partnership with Bressingham Primary School, with the headteacher running both schools. St Andrew's has a full-time assistant headteacher in school, who plays a major role in the leadership and management of the school. At the time of the inspection, the school had a temporary headteacher, awaiting the appointed head to take up the post in September 2008. Awards achieved include the recently gained Healthy Schools Status and the Activemark, which acknowledges the school's physical activity provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Andrew's is a good school in which pupils achieve well. The extent to which pupils grow in their personal development is outstanding, as a result of the exceptionally high level of care, support and guidance they receive. The leadership and management of the assistant headteacher are outstanding. She takes a leading role in the running of St Andrew's and her leadership is based on an excellent knowledge and understanding of pupils. A headteacher of considerable experience and proven expertise is working temporarily with the assistant headteacher in leading the school successfully. The school is well thought of in the community. One parent wrote, 'The school's ethos of kindness and gentleness, together with their high expectations, is clearly showing its benefit through our three children. They are happy, confident children who are keen to learn and eager to attend school. We could not ask for anything more.' This represents the views of the vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils also think very highly of their school and enjoy being there, as shown in their good attendance and punctuality. They say they will miss St Andrew's very much when they have to move on to their next school, a move for which they are well prepared.

Pupils at all levels achieve well at each stage of the school. Excellent academic guidance and the setting of challenging targets for each individual promote good achievement. By the end of Reception, children achieve the nationally expected goals and many exceed them, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils continue to achieve well throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is exceptionally high, above average in writing but broadly average in mathematics. Standards in English and science are consistently above average at the end of Year 6. Until recently, standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have been broadly average, and generally not as high as in English. This year, attainment in mathematics is above average and the school anticipates improved results in the national tests. The school is rightly very proud of the levels of performance and standards in the creative aspects of learning. The quality of singing is exceptionally high. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to play the recorder and a good range of other instruments, such as drums, clarinet and the trumpet. When these pupils come together as a choir and orchestra in assemblies or other special performances, standards are exceptionally high. For such a small school, they have an impressive record in competitive sports, confirming good physical skills. These are just a few of the ways in which the school shows excellent equality of opportunity for pupils at all levels to achieve well and to put their talents to good use. Artwork on display is of a high quality and the use of computers to generate art represents good information and communication technology skills.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have an extraordinary understanding of others' feelings, both in school and in the wider community. Pupils take responsibility very seriously and have an excellent awareness of how each individual can make a difference. They work as school councillors, as playground 'buddies' or on the ECO team. Each of these groups makes a significant impact on school life. The 'buddies' ensure that younger pupils are safe and happy. Pupils report that they feel safe and are free from any sort of aggressive behaviour, which they say does not exist in this school. The school council has an impressive list of developments in which members have been involved. The ECO team has been instrumental in the development of the pond and wild area, and in creating a sizeable plot in which they have plans to grow vegetables, using their excellent knowledge of healthy eating. They enlisted the support of a good number of parents to help with the heavy work.

Such events, community lunches, musical or drama performances and the school's involvement with the church, place the school at the heart of the local community. The school has strong links with the high school, which provides added support in key areas such as literacy.

Teaching is good. It is based on mutual respect between adults and pupils, which together with high expectations ensures that behaviour in lessons and around the school generally is excellent. Work is matched well to pupils' capabilities, but occasionally does not challenge the more able pupils sufficiently in mathematics. In this subject, the proportion attaining the higher levels is below that in English. The curriculum is good. Careful planning ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes gain skills, knowledge and understanding within a structured curriculum framework. Staff have recognised that links between subjects could be stronger, and that more frequent opportunities should be provided for pupils to learn through the local environment. The school has introduced these approaches to learning, which have proved very popular and successful with staff and pupils alike. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural awareness, creativity and performance skills through strong provision in the arts and foreign languages. Personal, social, health and citizenship education have a strong position in the curriculum and support pupils' personal development well.

The school is led and managed well. Subject leaders carry out their leadership role across the two partner schools. Leadership for mathematics is currently temporary and not as strong as in English. Governors are fully committed to the school, know it well and provide good levels of support and challenge. They are looking to 'get back on track' with their monitoring role after being involved in major decision making, including the appointment of the new headteacher. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Monitoring and evaluation by most subject leaders and leadership staff is rigorous, resulting in accurate identification of areas for improvement. Actions taken by the school are appropriate and effective, such as this year's improvement in mathematics at Key Stage 2. The school therefore has a good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a good start in the Foundation Stage. This is because of the good expertise and strong teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistants. The good curriculum encourages enjoyment, discovery and independence. Because Reception children are in the same class as Key Stage 1 pupils, transition between Reception and Year 1 is easy, allowing children to move into Year 1 National Curriculum work when they are ready. Careful monitoring of each child's progress enables staff to recognise how well they are progressing and when to move them on to the next steps. The curriculum is planned carefully so that all areas of learning are fully included and children have lots of opportunities to learn through play and investigation, both indoors and in the outside classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a more effective approach to subject leadership in mathematics so that standards are consistently above average and match those in English.
- Strengthen links between subjects to add even more meaning to learning and provide greater opportunities for pupils to learn through focusing on the environment.

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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?	1
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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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?	1

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	1
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

9 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's C of E VA Primary School, North Lopham, IP22 2LR

Thank you all for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. With your help, I managed to find out a lot about life in your school. What I saw and heard impressed me. I enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, visiting lessons to watch you work and speaking to you to find out what you think about the school and how you contribute to making it an enjoyable place to be. Those of you I spoke to enjoy school very much.

You go to a good school. Mrs Jones, Mr Ogilvie and all the adults working with you are working well to provide you with a good education. The teaching and the curriculum are good and there are some excellent aspects to the curriculum, particularly the opportunities for you to make music, which you do very well. I really enjoyed your musical performance. I thought the standard of singing and instrument playing was extremely good and you must be very proud of your achievement in this area of your work; I know the staff are very proud of you. The adults care for you is excellently and many of you copy this example and care for other children in a very impressive way. You help to make others feel safe in school and enjoy being there. I think your behaviour is excellent. You all make good progress in your lessons and the standard of your work is better than most other children of your age. Your work in maths, though, is not as good as in English. You are well prepared to go on to the next school.

I am asking staff and governors to help you do as well in maths as you do in English, and to develop the curriculum to make learning even more interesting and meaningful for you.

I wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman Inspector