

# Clare Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124533
<b>Local Authority</b>	SUFFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	314952
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Cheryl Thompson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	127
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tom Shaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joan Horner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Erbury Place Clare Sudbury Suffolk CO10 8PZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01787277423
<b>Fax number</b>	01787278390

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving Clare and the surrounding villages. Almost all pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Children's attainment on entry to school is very wide ranging but is broadly typical of children nationally.

The school is subject to the local authority's reorganisation plan for schools in the area. At the time of the inspection, no decisions had been made as to its future.

## 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 with a friendly community atmosphere. It provides effective care, guidance and support for its pupils. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors provide purposeful leadership and management. The school demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement. Leaders demonstrate a strong and successful commitment to providing a school where pupils do well and, with their families, feel part of a caring community. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. However, monitoring the school's performance is not always rigorous enough to ensure that small inconsistencies in implementing the school's policies are dealt with swiftly. Parents are supportive of the school and have many good things to say about it such as, 'The school is a jewel in the community' and, 'I am constantly pleased with the care, nurturing and educational support'.

Pupils say they like their teachers and that they are fair. Teaching is good because it is firmly based on regular assessment, which ensures pupils have work at the right level. The school sets challenging targets for pupils to attain by the end of the year. Teachers make good use of the school's progress tracking system to make sure their pupils are on course to achieve or exceed these targets. Consequently, pupils make good progress as they move through the school and attain above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science in national teacher assessments. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress. However, standards in handwriting are not good enough and do not always reflect pupils' abilities. Strong links with outside agencies such as sporting partnerships provide good opportunities for pupils to learn new sports and keep themselves fit. The good curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors. These contribute well to pupils' good personal development, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy school and say they have fun. They are adamant that there is no bullying in school and are confident that should they have any worries, an adult will help them. They behave well in school and are keen to take advantage of all that is on offer. Pupils in Year 4 are responsible and well-mannered young people and good ambassadors for their school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves fit, safe and healthy. Leadership and social skills develop well through opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for the younger ones. These good social skills together with the good progress made in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them well for their future.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides a good start to children's education. Parents are pleased with the care and support provided and particularly appreciate the 'newsletter' from the Nursery, telling them what will be going on in the forthcoming week. Provision in the Nursery is outstanding. Excellent teaching stimulates and builds on children's curiosity. At the start of the day, they cannot wait to get into their class and involve themselves in the carefully structured activities on offer.

From a very wide range of starting points, children make good progress overall and outstanding progress in their personal development and in their communication, language and literacy skills. Good teaching in Reception continues the progress made in the Nursery and ensures that very

good progress is made in developing basic literacy skills. The strategy of grouping pupils according to the letter sounds they need to learn next is very profitable for children of all abilities. Standards for the current group of children in Reception are above those typically found. There are two more intakes of children to come into the class. The headteacher provides good overall leadership for the Foundation Stage and all staff work very efficiently together as a team.

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

- Improve standards of handwriting by deciding on a suitable style, teaching it well and allowing pupils regular opportunities for practice.
- Monitor the work of the school even more rigorously so that minor inconsistencies in provision are dealt with.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well. Children's attainment on entry to Year 1 is very wide ranging and can vary significantly from year to year. Overall, it is generally in line with national expectations. A strength of the school is the good progress made in developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, which pupils use profitably in lessons and topic work in the older class. Pupils with significant learning or behaviour difficulties thrive in the school's caring and supportive atmosphere and also make good progress.

Standards in national assessments range from above to well above average but fluctuate from year to year reflecting the variation in the abilities of each group of pupils being assessed. In 2007, standards dipped because these pupils experienced considerable disruption to their learning when in Year 1 through an unusually high turnover of staff. They made exceptionally good progress in their Year 2 but still had some more ground to make up in mathematics. Standards in the current Year 2 are well above average. Standards in Year 4 are above age-related expectations. However, the standard of many pupils' handwriting is low because there is not a consistent approach towards developing a good style. The school has identified the need to review how handwriting is taught in the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Good relationships within the school mean that pupils are confident in voicing their opinions and have positive attitudes to learning. The school council makes a good contribution to the school and local community. Older pupils willingly take on responsibility for younger ones, for example, in their junior road safety officer and play leader roles. Behaviour is good overall. Pupils understand that a few of their classmates find it difficult to manage their behaviour and, for their age, show good levels of tolerance and understanding towards them. Pupils have a good understanding of a healthy diet and how to keep themselves fit by regular exercise. Attendance is average and has improved as a result of tighter measures to encourage good attendance and the firm stance taken to discourage families from taking holidays in term time. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall with some outstanding teaching. Where teaching is of the highest quality, excellent relationships underpin the very high expectations which pupils are so eager to meet. Across the school, teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and keep good track of their progress. Good planning ensures that work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils' work is regularly marked but written comments do not always advise pupils on how well they have done against their targets. In these cases, pupils are not sure about how to improve their work.

Proficient teaching assistants are a valued and valuable part of the teaching team. They have a positive impact on pupils' good personal development and academic progress. Teachers deploy them very effectively to work with groups and to support individuals.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets pupils' needs well. It provides a good range of clubs which pupils say they enjoy. The school's good personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to understand and value personal qualities such as kindness and respect for others. Links between subjects, such as history and English, make learning more meaningful. The school has rightly identified this as an area for further development to ensure that pupils learn key skills systematically.

The school uses a wide range of visits and visitors well to develop pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Links with sports partnerships provide a good range of sporting activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. Parents speak warmly of this. The great majority are pleased with all the school provides. A very small number expressed concerns about behaviour and how often pupils read to the teacher. Inspectors found evidence that pupils read regularly to an adult and that behaviour in lessons and at play is good. Trained adult playleaders ensure that pupils play purposefully and the very few who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are well supported. Safeguarding procedures are secure and robust. Each pupil is valued. Staff know them well. Consequently, any concerns are noted and dealt with promptly. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good because needs are identified quickly, support is good and expertise from outside agencies is used well.

Good links with the middle school ensure that pupils are familiar with staff, routines and layout of their 'new' school. Consequently, pupil's transfer to middle school is generally smooth and straightforward. The school strives successfully to involve parents in their child's learning. For example, it provides good opportunities for them to work alongside their child in lessons or to learn how the school teaches reading. During the inspection, several parents shared an investigative mathematics lesson and said they felt they had learned a lot!

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, deputy, teaching team and governors share a common vision for a school with high standards in academic and personal achievement. In spite of a high turnover of staff and staff illness, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Relationships between the school and parents are productive and have a significant impact on pupils' good progress. Parents' and pupils' views are sought and acted upon. Self-evaluation is good and informs the comprehensive school improvement plan. Targets are used well to raise standards.

The headteacher's regular programme of lesson observations provides her with a very good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and helps teachers to improve their practice further. However, not enough rigour is applied when monitoring pupils' learning, for example by looking at their books. As a result, the school does not have a precise enough picture of minor inconsistencies in practices and whether school policies are being followed, such as for marking, and hence rectify them. Governance is good. Governors take a knowledgeable interest in the work of the school and help in classes regularly. When they feel it is appropriate, they challenge the school to do even better. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

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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 <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	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

<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	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**

12 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Clare Primary School, Clare, Suffolk, CO10 8PZ

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school. Like you, I think it is a very friendly place to be and you get on well together. I really enjoyed your Christmas productions. My particular thanks to those of you who kindly gave up part of your lunchtime to talk to me. I found what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you my findings.

This is a good school. You told me that you like coming to school and I can see why, particularly when I saw the interesting lessons you have and the good range of clubs, sporting activities, visitors and other opportunities the school provides. You told me that one of the best things in the school are the teachers and that you get on very well with them. Teaching is good and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. I could see that standards are above average and you are very confident using the laptops in lessons even though you have not had them for very long. You make good progress because teachers keep a close eye on how well you are getting on. Your headteacher provides good leadership and I thought the other members of staff and governors who help with the leadership are also doing a good job. I have asked your headteacher to do two things to make your school even better.

- To make sure that you get taught a good style of handwriting and have time to practise so that you become good at it.
- To check carefully on your work to make sure that the school's policies are being followed properly.

This is a good school, not only because of what the adults bring to it but also because of your contributions. You are very positive about learning and I was very impressed with the good manners and thoughtfulness of Year 4 pupils. You are good ambassadors for your school.

I wish you well in the future.

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector