

Dell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124638
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	314997
Inspection dates	10–11 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen Yates

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Howard
Headteacher	Mrs Beryl Hindes
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Dell Road Oulton Broad Lowestoft Suffolk NR33 9NU
Telephone number	01502 565956
Fax number	01502 566279

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an above average sized primary school. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is a little higher than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than that normally found. Pupils from all across the town attend a Small Class Unit, which caters for those with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the number of those who have English as an additional language are both much lower than those found nationally. When children start school, the skills and abilities of many of them are considerably below those normally found for children of this age. The school is subject to the Local Authority's plans for reorganisation in 2010.

The school has received the following awards: Activemark, Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dell Primary School is at the heart of the community and provides pupils with a good standard of education. Relationships are excellent and parents are very appreciative of the way in which the school involves them in supporting their children's learning. Parents are also delighted with the proposals that their children will be able to stay at the school for two further years due to the forthcoming reorganisation. Partnerships with outside agencies to promote the well-being of learners are excellent.

Given their starting points, children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. However, despite making good progress, most do not reach the levels expected for children at the end of Reception. Although provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, the lack of any cover for the outdoor area restricts access to outdoor learning opportunities. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 4. National test results at Year 2 are broadly average and standards at Year 4 are in line with expectations. Standards are generally better in writing than mathematics and reading. The good overall achievement is due to good teaching and a positive climate for learning.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Attendance is average. Pupils behave extremely well in and out of classes because there is a keen emphasis on learning through investigation and they are interested and involved in their work. They are extremely happy in school and thoroughly enjoy their learning. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy and active lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe. They participate very well in a wide range of community projects and also take on a high level of responsibility within the school. Pupils work together very well and by making good progress in acquiring basic skills, they are well-prepared for life beyond school.

The school provides an excellent curriculum with a particularly good range of enrichment activities. The use of information and communication technology (ICT), to help learning in other subjects is a strength of the school. Care, guidance and support are good. Excellent support is provided for the pupils taught in the Small Class Unit. The headteacher monitors pupils' progress carefully but there is scope to improve the academic guidance provided for pupils by agreeing and implementing a progress tracking system that is straightforward to use and easy for teachers to extract information.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher and her deputy are committed to ensuring the school provides pupils with many exciting opportunities for learning. In most respects, the school's evaluations of its effectiveness are accurate. Subject leaders are diligent in analysing test results and in identifying areas where curriculum improvements are needed. However, they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the progress made by classes, groups or individual pupils. Similarly, although governors give very good support to the school they do not hold the school to account for standards achieved as well as they might because there is insufficient, easy to follow information available to them.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children arrive in the Nursery, their skills are much lower than expected, particularly in speaking, listening, personal and social development. There are close links with the playgroup and staff visit children in their homes before they start school. This helps the children to settle happily. Overall, teaching is good but children make the best progress in the Reception classes. Adults are very supportive and encouraging, this develops children's confidence and independence. The Foundation Stage leader has sound plans to improve the overall assessment and recording of children's progress. The good curriculum provides an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The accommodation is good. It includes a well-equipped outside play area but this is underused because there is no covered section to facilitate learning in wet weather. The plans in place demonstrate that the school has recognised this shortcoming and is taking appropriate action to bring about the needed improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the plans to provide a cover in the outdoor area to enable children in the Foundation Stage to engage in outdoor activities more often.
- Refine the systems for checking on the progress pupils make to enable teachers and governors to keep a closer eye on how well pupils are doing as they move through the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

National assessment results for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2007 showed an improvement on the two previous years. Attainment was above average for writing and broadly average in reading and mathematics. Current standards at Year 2 are also broadly average. This indicates pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils also make good progress in Years 3 and 4. Overall, the standards reached in the current Year 4 are in line with the national expectations. Pupils are making the best progress in reading. The progress of those pupils who find learning difficult is good. Pupils are on course to meet the challenging targets set.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility towards one another and readily recognise right from wrong. They enjoy coming to school very much, behave very well, and show genuine politeness to adults and to each other. They show great consideration for those less fortunate than themselves and frequently raise funds for needy causes both within the community and further afield. The school council is entrusted with a high degree of responsibility and pupils enjoy taking on tasks around the school, which promote the well-being of others. Pupils' progress in literacy, mathematics and ICT is helping to provide them with the skills they will need for their future lives.

There is a very high level of participation in a particularly wide range of sporting activities in the school's spacious and well-maintained grounds. Pupils show good aptitude in art, music and drama where they have been proud to represent their school in performances.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships are very good and this promotes enthusiasm for learning. The quality of teaching is usually good or better. Lessons begin briskly with teachers carefully explaining exactly what they want pupils to learn. Strengths in teaching lie in the detailed planning of work to match pupils' specific learning needs. The clever use of questioning sustains pupils' interest. In the best lessons, pupils are highly enthusiastic, they think for themselves and are thoroughly challenged. High standards of behaviour are expected and usually achieved. On rare occasions, when lessons do not capture pupils' interests so well, the pace of learning slows and a minority of pupils lose concentration. The use of interactive whiteboards has a positive impact on learning. 'Short' lessons are focused on the development of skills and give pupils good opportunities for learning across a range of activities, such as touch-typing. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers recognised the difficulties of practical, experiential teaching methods to motivate and inspire pupils to learn in mathematics. Consequently, they are now providing increasingly good opportunities for active learning in this subject.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has several outstanding features and the excellent provision helps pupils develop very well socially and emotionally. Very good links are made across subjects and these help pupils to see how skills learned in one area can be transferred to another. A highlight of the day, which pupils eagerly look forward to, is the inclusion in the timetable of a 'short lesson' where pupils work in small groups on specific areas of need. The school is particularly successful in planning for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and thinking skills. ICT is used very well to motivate pupils and to develop independence in learning. Provision for those pupils who find learning difficult and for those who have disabilities in the Small Class Unit is excellent. Many visits and visitors enhance the curriculum. There is a high take-up for an exceptionally good range of sporting, musical and creative activities, which pupils and their parents greatly appreciate. Singing is popular as is the playing of musical instruments.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for safeguarding the children are rigorous and reflect the school's high regard for pupils' welfare and safety. Pupils feel happy and safe because the school provides a very caring and supportive environment. Incidents of bullying and racism are very rare and dealt with swiftly. Early identification of pupils who find learning difficult ensures they are supported well by proficient teaching assistants. Staff in the Small Class Unit and the nurture group provide outstanding support by helping many pupils, who might otherwise be at risk of social and academic isolation, to join in with all school activities. Support for pupils' academic development is good but there is scope to provide even better guidance through judicious use of a whole-school pupil tracking system. Appropriate targets set for English and mathematics are shared regularly with parents which enables them to take an active role in the education of their own children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her deputy provide strong, clearly focused leadership. They are supported by a dedicated senior leadership team and a committed governing body. There is a real sense of teamwork throughout the school and emphasis on planning across year groups is successful in bringing about improvements. Subject leaders use their expertise and share their knowledge well with colleagues. Nevertheless, they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the progress made by different groups of pupils so that their skills can be used fully effectively to bring about further improvements. Governors carry out the majority of their duties well, but they acknowledge that they lack the full range of information required to keep a very sharp eye on how well pupils are doing. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

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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	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?	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	3
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?	1
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

14 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dell Primary School, Lowestoft NR33 9NU

I know you will remember that a team of inspectors recently visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you. This letter is to thank you for making us feel so welcome and to tell you what we found out about your school.

One of the things the school is really good at doing is helping you to grow into friendly, very well-behaved and enthusiastic learners. You told us how much you love school and how well all the adults look after you and help you to learn. Your parents agree and we saw that this was true on our visit. You are a credit to your school and your parents.

You work hard and the staff work equally hard to make your lessons interesting. We saw the excellent range of activities you take part in. As a result of your hard work you make good progress and are well prepared for your next school. You have a particularly good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and of how to keep yourselves safe, and fit. We saw many examples of how well you care for one another and take on responsibilities in and around the school. The school is outstanding in the way staff work with people and resources from outside the school. Those of you who spend time in the Small Class Unit and the nurture group receive excellent support.

To help you to make even better progress we know that your teachers and governors have plans to provide an outside covered area so that the youngest children can work and play outdoors more often. We have asked them to make sure that the cover is installed very soon. We also agree with your teachers and governors that they need to use the information collected on how well you are doing even more carefully so that they can give you even more support.

We wish you well for the future.

Kathleen Yates

Lead inspector