

Great Waldingfield Church of England VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124699
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	315025
Inspection dates	21–22 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Misselbrook
Headteacher	Mrs A Jones
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Folly Road Great Waldingfield Suffolk CO10 0RR
Telephone number	01787 374055
Fax number	01787 377064

Age group	4–9
Inspection dates	21–22 April 2008
Inspection number	315025

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small first school serves a diverse community. Almost half the children come from outside the immediate area and more children than usual join the school after the beginning of their Reception Year. Almost all children come from White British backgrounds. Fewer children than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and none has a statement of special educational need. The school has a strong Christian ethos. It runs Suffolk Family Learning courses for parents, and local pensioners join children for lunch each week. The school holds the Activemark award and has national Healthy Schools status. It is a 'Silver Eco' school, keeping hens and growing and selling produce. The independent playgroup is accommodated in a spare classroom.

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, well led and managed, fulfilling its aims to help children develop lively, enquiring minds and to value each other. The school is at the heart of the community. Parents often work alongside children on joint projects, and older members of the community join children for lunch on some days. Staff are united in their aim to give relevant and practical experiences to the children, providing an outstanding curriculum, so the school is well placed for further improvement. Children have an excellent understanding of environmental issues. The youngest care for the school garden every week and others look after chickens called Bubble and Squeak, using or selling their eggs. Children respect and care for each other and behave exceptionally well. They take their additional responsibilities seriously, enjoy their learning enormously and are extremely proud of their diverse achievements.

Year groups are small and comparisons of standards between each year are not statistically viable. This year, for example, the Year 2 cohort is extremely small and half the children have learning or social challenges. The result of this is that standards in Year 2 this year are significantly lower than the above average standards attained in 2007. Nevertheless, children of all abilities make good progress in English throughout the school, an improvement since the last inspection and a tribute to the school's efforts. The most able pupils achieve well in mathematics, again because of a school focus. Children with average or below average mathematical abilities make satisfactory progress. Teachers rarely give written guidance when they mark children's mathematics work and systems for tracking progress are not yet fully embedded. In other subjects, such as music, the excellent curriculum and the enthusiasm of staff, result in good, and at times, outstanding achievements.

Teachers plan lessons well, catering for the different age groups and abilities within their classes. There are excellent relationships between children and adults, and so children work hard. There is good support for children who need extra help in class. Basic skills are taught well, but children's written work is not always well organised, making it difficult for them to see how they have improved and for teachers to evaluate standards. This is especially so in mathematics. Children are cared for very well. There is impressive liaison between school and home and a real sense of the school as one big happy family. Children receive excellent pastoral guidance so that they have a good understanding of how to take care of themselves and others. They have their own personal targets but the limitations in teachers' marking restrict their opportunities to take responsibility for improving their work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage are taught with those in Year 1. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of the different age groups and activities are planned to ensure that children of both age groups achieve well. There is an attractive and stimulating environment and adults work together well. Children are cared for extremely well and feel safe and happy in school. The school admits them part-time before their official starting date, ensuring that their entry to school life is smooth and enjoyable. They are encouraged to become responsible and independent and to help each other. Children have a range of abilities when they start school. Good systems for analysing what children can do when they start school enable the teacher to plan activities to develop their skills. Although several have below average skills in

aspects of the curriculum when they start school, almost all attain the expected levels by the time they join Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of children with average or below average abilities in mathematics.
- Refine assessment and tracking systems and the organisation of children's work so that teachers can easily evaluate standards and track children's progress.
- Ensure all teachers give children written advice when marking their work in mathematics as well as in English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although some children join the school with below average knowledge and skills, most achieve well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 were slightly above average in 2007. This year, although standards are much lower, children's written work shows that they are making good progress from their starting points. Children make good progress in their mathematics lessons but it is difficult to track their achievement over time because their work is not organised in a way that shows day-to-day progress. Children in Years 3 and 4 also make good progress in English, helped by the many opportunities to use their skills in relevant and interesting ways across the curriculum. Standards are at least in line with those of children nationally and several are working at higher levels. The most able children achieve well in mathematics, relishing the challenges set for them. Other children make satisfactory progress over time, although several are working at levels lower than those expected for children in Year 4.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

One parent sums up the feelings of many parents by saying 'Our son has grown so much in confidence and self-belief since being here and can't wait to get to school each day.' There is a strong sense of mutual respect in school amongst adults and children and everyone is valued. Attendance is good and behaviour is impeccable almost all the time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are developing an excellent understanding of the lives of others around the world through their links with, and support for, schools in Uganda and Tanzania, as well as their partner school on the Isle of Harris. They support a range of charities and have strong links with the church. There is a strong musical tradition and standards are high. All children in Key Stage 2 are learning to play the cornet and the 'noise club' produces high quality singing with the support of parents and ex-pupils. Children's Eco work, gardening and egg production ensure they all have an excellent understanding of how to eat healthily and are gaining good skills to prepare them for their futures. They enjoy the many sporting activities and value of exercise highly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. As one parent commented, 'The level of enthusiasm from all the staff, across the whole school, is second to none.' Teachers make good use of the flexible

and imaginative curriculum to plan their lessons. This enables children to use their information and communication technology and English skills across the curriculum, making learning very purposeful. Teachers and teaching assistants provide children with good support in lessons, questioning effectively to encourage children to think. However, this is not sufficiently followed up in children's written work, where there are few comments to motivate children to further learning or to advise them how to improve. Some children's work for several subjects is undated and stored in one folder, making it impossible for teachers or children to see progress over time. Children know their targets but this lack of written information prevents them from taking full advantage of the wise advice given in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is extremely well planned to develop children's basic skills from year to year, enabling teachers to provide effectively for the range of ages and abilities in their classes. Teachers and children decide which topics they want to study. Plans are adapted to focus on the chosen topic, while ensuring that children develop knowledge and skills progressively and fully cover the National Curriculum. Within this framework, children become very much part of the local community and involved in local and national issues. Parents, past pupils, governors, local spiritual leaders and many others contribute to children's learning, bringing tremendous richness and diversity to children's learning. For one afternoon each week, children experience a range of additional activities as diverse as German and cookery. Regular environmental responsibilities and an excellent personal, social and health education curriculum ensure that children develop a strong sense of citizenship. Adults and children's 'ownership' of the topics ensures that everyone enjoys learning enormously.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides the children with excellent pastoral care and guidance. It rigorously applies the requirements for safeguarding children and works extremely well with other agencies to provide support for children with medical, learning or personal challenges. The school is a safe and secure environment, where new children are welcomed and made to feel at home. Adults and children care for each other. The school entrance bears the statement 'Every child and grown-up matters' and the truth of this statement is apparent throughout the school. Children receive good guidance in lessons. They are set personal targets for English and mathematics and some are involved in drawing them up. These are shared with parents. The liaison books between home and school also help to ensure that children have help if they have personal difficulties or have trouble with homework. However, the limited guidance given in children's books results in missed opportunities to help children take responsibility for improving their learning from day-to-day.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong and inclusive leadership. She has a good understanding of children's needs and is sensitive to factors outside school that affect children's attitudes and learning. Governors support the school effectively. They often work with children and are well informed about achievement and development. Resources, including adults, are deployed

effectively. With only three classes, all teachers have several additional responsibilities, which they carry out efficiently. They are fully involved in drawing up the sensible plans for school improvement. There are opportunities for teachers to monitor teaching and learning and to evaluate children's work. This helps them, and the headteacher, to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Although systems for tracking children's progress are not yet effective in enabling teachers to measure individual performance accurately, the school has already identified this as an area for improvement. The school's success in meeting targets to improve writing throughout the school and the performance of the most able children demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	2
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?	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

23 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Great Waldingfield Church of England VC Primary School

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help during my visit to your school. I really enjoyed meeting you all and seeing all the lovely things that you do in school. I can see how much you enjoy your learning and how hard you all work. I did not spot anyone like 'Justin Time' by the school door who just sits! A special thanks to the members of the school council who gave me their views. You and your parents told me how good your school is. I agree with you. Your teachers help you to make good progress. You have wonderful things to learn to help you find out about the world. You learn to be responsible people and to take care of yourselves, each other and the environment. You are cared for very well in school. You are rarely absent from school and your behaviour is excellent. Well done.

I have asked your teachers to do some things to help you all to achieve as well as you are able. Some of you make good progress in maths but some of you could do better. I want your teachers to help you all do as well as you can. I would like you to be able to see how your work is improving from day-to-day by making sure it is kept together and in order. Teachers give you wise advice in lessons and ask you challenging questions. I want them to do the same when they mark your work. You will then be able to see what you need to do to improve as well as how well you are learning. Make sure you take their advice! I have also asked teachers to make sure that they know exactly what you can do and how quickly you are learning. This will help them to notice if you are struggling with something or find things too easy. They can then be even better at giving you the help you need.

You have a good headteacher who, with the help of the other teachers and adults in school, makes sure that you have what you need. But it is everybody in school and the community, and especially all of you, who make the school a happy and exciting place to learn. I wish you all the best for the future, a good harvest this year and plenty of eggs.

Best wishes

Judy Dawson

Lead inspector