

# Great Whelnetham Church of England Controlled School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124700
<b>Local Authority</b>	SUFFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	315026
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joanne Harvey

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	69
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ceri Thomson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C Lawson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Stanningfield Road Great Whelnetham Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0UA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01284 386203
<b>Fax number</b>	01284 386203

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether all pupils achieve as well as they can in all subjects, whether teaching is equally effective throughout school, what has been the impact of leadership and management since the last inspection and the accuracy of self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior staff and governor representatives. In addition, there was observation of parts of several lessons, scrutiny of school information and its self-evaluation, samples of pupils' work, parent questionnaires and discussions with pupils. 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 assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. Where appropriate, these have been included in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school serving the rural village of Great Whelnetham and surrounding villages. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability is slightly less than found in most schools whilst the percentage with a statement of special educational need is similar.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstandingly effective school, which provides very good value for money. Standards are well above average, sometimes exceptionally so and all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make very good progress through the school. The arrangements for children in the Reception class are good.

The school's success arises from the continued clear vision and direction given by the new headteacher to a remarkably caring and committed staff. Everyone works extremely hard as a team, in partnership with governors and with the community, to achieve the best they can for all the children and ensure pupils become very well rounded individuals. As a result, all pupils achieve very well academically and personally. It is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of parents are highly appreciative of the school. One wrote: 'Our experiences of the school have all been extremely positive. We couldn't say enough good things about it'. Another said: 'I feel the teaching staff care deeply and are brilliant. The school is well organised, has fantastic facilities and overall a kind, professional academic staff. We are very pleased with Great Whelnetham.' These comments represent the views of many. Pupils echo them, saying that, 'We like the teachers because they make it the best for us.' Pupils' evident enjoyment of the education they receive is also reflected in the well above average level of attendance.

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding and reflects the school's Christian ethos very well. Behaviour is exemplary, so rarely a moment is lost maintaining discipline. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and to accept responsibilities as often as possible, so they grow in maturity and confidence. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe. They say they like to be active and have a good understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices. The combination of very good literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology skills and highly developed personal skills equips pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of education and adult life. The excellent pastoral care offered, includes systems for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils and safeguarding procedures that comply with requirements. One pupil said that, 'if ever you don't feel good there is always someone to help you out and cheer you up.' Systems to provide academic guidance, are rigorous and ensure a close check is kept on how well pupils are progressing and that everyone is helped to do as well as they can.

Pupils benefit from outstanding teaching. New staff are carefully trained into the school's routines to ensure standards remain high. Teachers promote excellent relationships and outstanding behaviour, resulting in pupils who work hard and have very positive attitudes to learning. Lessons are planned, based on careful assessment, to take pupils' learning forward from whatever level each individual has reached previously. Those who find learning more difficult, including those with learning difficulties, get excellent support from able teaching assistants, so these pupils achieve very well. Pupils say they feel extremely well supported by all their teachers and that, 'teachers are kind and help you when you are stuck, all you have to do is put your hand up and they are there.'

The good curriculum focuses particularly well on ensuring pupils' basic skills are highly developed. It is also greatly enriched by visits out and visitors to school which add interest, enjoyment and lasting memories. This is particularly the case for the creative arts where visiting artists, dancers and writers are a regular feature and result in extremely high quality work which can be seen

on display around the school. Pupils enjoy an impressive range of activities in lunchtime and after school clubs; Chinese Club is a particular favourite. A high degree of staff commitment ensures that pupils both benefit from, and contribute well to, the local community and environment. Creative links are beginning to be made between subjects. Learning is becoming more active and includes practical activities, such as design and building projects, which pupils say they enjoy and which enhances learning. Staff are looking forward to implementing plans to develop these opportunities further. The school recognises, however, that the Foundation Stage curriculum does not yet offer enough opportunities and experiences to encourage children to be active and make choices about their learning, or to explore their ideas and interests, using what they have learned both in the classroom and in the lovely outside area every day.

The headteacher recently took over an already effective school. She wasted no time in identifying and embracing existing strengths, whilst recognising and tackling areas for further improvement. Systematic and accurate evaluation procedures are in place to check accurately how well the school is doing. Consequently, there is a clear vision and strategic direction and the school has continued to go from strength to strength. Governors are highly active, not complacent and offer challenge and a great deal of practical support. Not all curriculum leaders yet play a full role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and in driving forward school improvement. However, expectations are high and challenging targets are set and achieved. Consequently, achievement and standards are outstanding. Pupils make very good progress from broadly average and sometimes lower starting points to achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. For some, achievement is exceptionally high.

Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully, and an excellent capacity to continue to improve is evident.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children do well in the Foundation Stage. They settle quickly into this caring environment. This is because of the good support and knowledge of staff, who make children and their families feel valued, secure and confident. Children enter with skills broadly expected for their age, though often slightly below in their communication and calculation skills. Highly effective teaching with strong support from teaching assistants ensures children begin to thrive, learn to behave well and work cooperatively. They make particularly good progress in developing their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Consequently, by the time children enter Year 1, they achieve the goals expected of them and many surpass them.

The school recognises that the Foundation Stage curriculum would benefit from a more continuous, integrated and themed approach where children have greater opportunities to initiate their own learning, explore ideas and revisit and practise what they have learned in different ways both indoors and outdoors every day.

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

- Further devolve leadership and management, so that everyone can extend their contribution to the quickening the pace of school improvement.
- Further enhance the Foundation Stage curriculum through a more integrated approach, giving children greater opportunities to direct and revisit their own learning both indoors and outdoors.

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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?	1
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	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

<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>	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Whelnetham CofE Controlled Primary School

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you what I thought about your school and how it could be even better.

I think you are lucky to go to such an outstanding school. You told me that teachers make learning fun and that you do exciting things in lessons. I saw some of this myself when looking around the school. You also told me that behaviour is excellent and that everyone gets on together very well. This was certainly the impression I got as I saw you working hard in classes, having lunch together quietly and sensibly, and playing outside. You make very good progress in your learning because the staff look after you so well. You also have adults to go to if you ever get worried and upset.

To make the school even better I have asked that in the Reception Class you are able to practise what you have already learned in different ways in the lovely outdoor area as well as the classroom.

I have also asked Mrs Lawson to share the leadership of the school more fully so that everyone can play their full part in helping to make further improvements as quickly as possible.

I am sure Mrs Lawson and the other staff will continue to work hard to make the school an exciting and interesting place for you. You can do your bit by continuing with your excellent behaviour and hard work.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector