

Norton CEVC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124710
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	315032
Inspection date	11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	82
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Ian Hooper
Headteacher	Mrs Stella Hart
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Close Norton Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP31 3LZ
Telephone number	01359 230520
Fax number	01359 233445

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether boys achieved as well as girls, whether teachers use assessment information well enough to meet the needs of all children and whether the monitoring of the work of the school is rigorous in identifying areas for further improvement. Information was gathered from observations of parts of lessons, discussions with the headteacher, other staff, children and governors. A range of school documents was scrutinised, as was a sample of the children's work, and all the parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small school in the village of Norton near Bury St Edmunds. The local area is generally advantaged and there are few families entitled to free school meals. The large majority of the children are of White British heritage and only a very small number speak English as an additional language. There are fewer children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than seen nationally, although within some year groups the proportion is higher. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class. The school holds Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. The headteacher was appointed in 2007.

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. This judgement matches that of the school's self-evaluation, which shows that the school knows itself well. Parents and carers are generally pleased with the quality of care and education provided and the new headteacher has gained the confidence of the school and local community. Staff, parents and children all note that they particularly enjoy the termly 'Share days' where parents and visitors work with the children on interesting themes.

Children enter the EYFS with mixed early learning experiences and attainment that is broadly in line with expectations for their age. However, data clearly shows that in some, but not all, years the initial skills of boys have been quite a bit below those of girls. Overall, children make good progress in Reception and enter Year 1 having met and sometimes exceeded expectations for their age. In Years 1 to 4, children continue to make good progress. At the end of Year 2, and when they leave school at the end of Year 4 standards are usually above national averages. Small year groups mean that standards vary slightly year on year reflecting children's different starting points and specific learning needs. In some years boys have not done as well as girls especially in reading and writing. This is something that the school has clearly recognised and is addressing successfully by putting in place strategies and resources to interest and motivate boys. There are good programmes of support for children and those of all abilities achieve well.

Personal development is outstanding. Most are happy, well-adjusted children who are keen to come to school and do well. This is reflected in very high levels of attendance. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. There are very imaginative activities to support the arts, which help them to develop a keen interest in the range of cultures in British society and support community cohesion very well. As a school that is firmly based on Christian principles, there are clear expectations of the children in terms of how they look after and care for others. There is a strong emphasis on politeness, respect and good manners. This ensures most have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children have a strong sense of community and there are numerous opportunities to take on responsibilities in and around the school. Monitors have roles, including as Junior Road Safety Officers, helping in the library and for composting. There are also many opportunities to work with other groups in the local community and learn about the world beyond their village. Behaviour is good overall and where there is any misbehaviour children are actively encouraged to tell the truth and say sorry. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy a good range of sporting activities. However, there is more work to be done to convince some children and their families of the benefits of healthy packed lunches. Above average standards and many opportunities to become responsible young citizens help to prepare the children well for their future.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The planning of lessons is effective and usually identifies linked activities for three levels of ability in the mixed-age classes. This meets the needs of most children well. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to provide information and support learning. Staff are skilled in organising activities where children can discuss their ideas with a partner. This not only ensures that children are actively involved in the lessons but also helps them in explaining their ideas to others. However, at times staff take ideas mainly from the girls and fail to challenge boys to respond in lessons.

Curriculum planning is good overall. There are excellent opportunities within lessons and in extra activities that enrich learning. Staff are particularly imaginative in using professional

artists, such as a potter, a glassblower and a craftsman using felt, who work with the children. This enables them to produce excellent quality artwork in a wide range of media. For a small school, there is an outstanding range of educational visits, out of school clubs and sporting activities that enrich learning. The curriculum for English, mathematics and all other subjects is good. Learning opportunities are carefully planned, including for the three mixed age classes.

The care, guidance and support of the children are good. The school takes seriously its responsibility to look after the children and all the requirements for safeguarding children are in place. While some work is marked well, staff often miss the opportunity to praise the children and identify what they have done well or what they need to improve. In the last year, the school extended the ways it checks and tracks the progress children make, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is now good and becoming increasingly effective in identifying where children may need support.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has made a good start in improving systems and the school environment, which is attractive and stimulating. While the teaching staff is a relatively new team, there is a clear sense of teachers working well together for the good of the children. School leadership is outward looking and, together with excellent links with a wide range of groups and organisations, this ensures success in uniting different groups in the community. Governance is good. There is a good number of governor committee meetings where information is shared well. This, coupled with a reasonable range of governor visits to the school, ensures that governors are generally well informed and able to carry out their responsibilities effectively. The monitoring of the work of the school is good which helps ensure that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the EYFS is good. Staff work within the guidelines of the local authority and admit children to full-time education at three points during the year. While overall skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to the school are in line with expectations, they are wide ranging and with small year groups vary from year to year. Children's personal and social development is often good on entry whilst other areas such as early writing skills are lower. Children make good overall progress in the EYFS in all areas of their learning. They enjoy school and often concentrate well, for instance when sorting pictures of the characters in the Christmas story and explaining who are the most important and why. Pupils settle very well, get on with those around them and try hard and as a result, their personal development is excellent. The curriculum is good, as are teaching and learning. Effective use is made of both the indoor and outdoor areas and the good range of resources. The care, guidance and support of children are good and staff have improved the ways they track progress so that they are able to identify and support children with additional needs at an early stage. Leadership and management are good which ensures the EYFS is an integral part of everything the school does.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of marking to make clear to children what they have done well and what needs to be improved.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Norton CEVC Primary School, Bury St Edmunds IP31 3LZ

Thank you very much for looking after Mrs Lowery and I when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed speaking to several of you and meeting you in lessons, at lunchtime, in assembly and when we spoke to the school council.

These are some of the best things we found:

- There is an excellent range of arts activities and other learning opportunities in and out of school that enrich your learning very well.
- Most of you really enjoy coming to school, get on well with others and try hard with your work.
- Because there are many opportunities for you to take on responsibilities you learn a lot about being good citizens and how to be a part of your local and wider communities.
- You understand the difference between right and wrong and how to keep yourself and others safe.
- The staff work well together and are keen to make sure things develop even more in the future.

Yours is a good school. To help things to improve further we have asked that:

- Staff improve the way they mark your work so that you know what you have done well and what else you might need to improve.

To help your school continue to improve, please try to behave well at all times and can you persuade your parents to help you to eat healthily?

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead Inspector