

Stoke-by-Nayland Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124713
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	315033
Inspection date	20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	75
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	Mr Peter Busfield
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Le Grice
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Street Stoke-by-Nayland Colchester Essex CO6 4QY
Telephone number	01206 262418

Age group	3–9
Inspection date	20 November 2008
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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:

- how well pupils progress in mathematics
- the extent to which teachers use assessment information to plan work at appropriate levels for different pupils
- the effectiveness of subject leaders in improving their areas of responsibility.

Inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, governors and pupils also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in 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 small school serves pupils from a wide area. Nearly all are from White British backgrounds and very few are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are catered for in a Nursery class and a Reception/Year 1 class. Children are admitted three times a year, at the beginning of each term. Attainment on entry to Reception is typical for the children's age although it varies widely from year to year.

The school has won a number of awards, including Healthy Schools and Active Mark. There has been a high turnover of staff over the past few years.

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 many strengths. It deserves its reputation in the local community for its welcoming and friendly atmosphere, good teaching and very good pastoral care and support. Parents value the school greatly. One said, 'The school seems to understand children's individual needs and if extra help is needed, they offer solutions.' Despite the many changes in staff recently, standards remain above average. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and because adults provide good levels of care and support. The school has made good progress since its last inspection by setting up a school council so that pupils can have more influence on school development. The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure it is more relevant to pupils' needs and interests.

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Nearly all pupils reach expected levels for their age in the national tests in Year 2. Achievement in reading and writing is good, with more pupils than average reaching the higher level 3. However, fewer pupils reach Level 3 in mathematics and science. Several strategies have been implemented to try to address this, including a weekly group session for gifted mathematicians. However, mathematics work in class does not always challenge the most able pupils, which means that they do not make as much progress as they should. The school has focused on English and mathematics in recent years and science has not received as much attention. Senior staff have identified the need to extend the levels of investigative work offered to pupils so that the more able are sufficiently challenged.

By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4, most are working at or above expected levels in English, mathematics and science. They also achieve well in art and design and information and communication technology (ICT) because of the many opportunities afforded for them to use these skills in different subjects. Throughout the school, pupils with general learning difficulties achieve well. They are included extremely effectively in lessons and benefit greatly from the valuable support offered by teaching assistants.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils enjoy very positive relationships with adults and this makes for a very pleasant, encouraging atmosphere in lessons. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are eager to respond to teachers' questions and also listen respectfully to one another's ideas and suggestions. Teachers are confident about using technology to enhance learning, and pupils say this makes it easier to understand new concepts. Pupils also appreciate the targets and challenges set by teachers which help them to understand how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. 'Three ticks and you've definitely done it!' explained one pupil, describing how he and the teacher together assessed his progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, contributing significantly to their overall personal development and well-being. They respond well to the school's Christian values and speak thoughtfully about their reflections in assembly, for example about the meaning of confession. Very strong links with the Church ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of Christian values. However, the school is extremely conscious of the need to ensure that pupils understand a range of different faiths and achieves this very well. Children in Reception and Year 1, for example, were learning about Hinduism and retold stories about Rama and Sita with great enthusiasm. Behaviour in the school is excellent and pupils go out of their way to help each other. Play leaders organise games and activities at lunchtime. Older children play happily with younger children, showing great care and attention

to their needs. The school council ensures that pupils have a voice in the running of their school. Councillors describe how they canvassed opinions about the new play area for example, so they could be sure it met everyone's needs. Pupils contribute extremely well to the village community, delivering harvest gifts to senior citizens, growing and planting trees in the neighbouring wood and playing an important role in the village Spring Fair and art exhibition. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the vast majority attend well. They take plenty of exercise and understand the importance of eating a healthy diet. They feel free from bullying and harassment. They all grow in confidence and leave the school as well rounded individuals with good skills and abilities, well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

The curriculum has improved greatly since the last inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding through cross-curricular topics. A painting by Henri Rousseau, for example, inspired high quality art and design projects in Years 3 and 4. These were complemented by well-written descriptions presented in an attractive format using ICT. Weekly French lessons, the annual Modern Foreign Languages Day and links with a school in Tanzania all help pupils to develop their understanding of different languages and cultures. Effective partnerships with the middle and senior schools have supported the development of a project to extend children's independence and learning skills. This is developing well, with pupils keen to accept more responsibility for their own learning.

Leadership and management are good. The school continues to improve well under the leadership of the acting headteacher. Through effective monitoring procedures, she has an accurate view of the school's performance. Careful analysis of pupils' progress reveals areas in which provision might be improved, for example in the progress of the more able pupils in mathematics and science. Governors support the school's work well, visiting regularly to gain a thorough understanding. They bring a good range of skills to help the school in many areas of its work. The high number of staff changes recently have hindered the development of the roles of subject leaders, which was an issue for improvement at the last inspection. They have a broad idea of performance but are not yet monitoring teaching and learning carefully enough to highlight specific areas for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery. They settle into routines quickly, play well together, learn to share toys and equipment and make choices about activities. They transfer easily to the Reception class, where adults are well known to them and routines are similar.

There is a suitable mix of adult-led tasks and activities that children choose for themselves. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy is firmly rooted in practical tasks that the children thoroughly enjoy. Reception children threw dice, for example, and added the totals, practising how to count on from a given number. Adults use every opportunity to encourage speaking and listening so this aspect of language develops well. Children make especially good progress in writing, which is very well taught. The school has begun to implement the revised EYFS curriculum and teachers make very effective use of the outdoor learning environment to make learning relevant to children's needs and interests. However, less emphasis is put upon extending creative skills, and children do not achieve as well in this aspect as they do in other areas of learning. Nevertheless, the good teaching results in children being excited about learning. They grow in confidence and independence and make good progress, so that by the time they move into Year 1, most reach, and some exceed the expected learning goals for their age.

The EYFS is well led and managed. Adults assess and monitor children's progress carefully so they can identify those who need extra help and those who can move on at a faster rate. Exceptional care is taken of the children, making sure they are safe at all times. Close links with parents, established in these early days at school, ensure a strong partnership between home and school. This contributes extremely well to children's progress as they become older.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the percentages of pupils who achieve level 3 in the national tests in mathematics and science by ensuring that more able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons.
- Extend the roles of subject coordinators to monitor teaching and learning more rigorously so they can identify specific areas for improvement.

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 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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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 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	3
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

21 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke-by-Nayland CE VC Primary School, Colchester, CO6 4QY

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and agree that yours is a good school with many strengths. Here are some of them.

- You make good progress in your work and reach standards that are above average.
- The teaching is good and you are keen to take part in lessons.
- The adults look after you well and keep you safe in school.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you show high levels of respect for adults and one another.
- You contribute extremely well to your school and local community.
- The adults organise really interesting activities for you, which makes learning fun.
- The people in charge are doing a good job and know what they have to do to make things even better.

We have asked the teachers to make sure that lessons challenge you all the time, especially in mathematics and science, so that you can make even better progress. We also think that some of the teachers with special responsibilities should be more involved in checking what is going on in classrooms and sharing some of their special skills and knowledge.

I know you will want to help them with these tasks and the best way you can do that is to keep working hard and behaving well. My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M Summers

Lead inspector