

Bramford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124723
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	315034
Inspection date	29 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Newton
Headteacher	Mr J Eden
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
School address	Duckamere Bramford Ipswich Suffolk IP8 4AH
Telephone number	01473 741598
Fax number	01473 741713

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how successful the 'International Primary Curriculum' (IPC) is and what benefits it brings; how well the school meets the widely varying learning needs of pupils with particular reference to their writing; and how the school has maintained its good performance since the last inspection.

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 and these have been included where appropriate in the report. Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and pupils' work; scrutinising school documentation, parents' questionnaire responses and records of pupils' achievement and progress; and discussions with the headteacher, senior staff and with pupils.

Description of the school

Bramford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a little smaller than average. The school serves Bramford, surrounding villages and the nearby outskirts of Ipswich. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils, who find learning difficult, including those with a statement of special educational need, is slightly above average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school has gained the Investor in People and Basic Skills Awards twice, has the International Schools Award, and the Activemark for sports. It is working towards the Healthy Schools Award, recognition as an Eco-school, the ICT Mark and Arts Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bramford provides a good education for its pupils. It has outstanding aspects in the curriculum it offers and in pupils' great enjoyment of schooling and their excellent behaviour. Parents acknowledge how well their children are performing. Typical of their comments is, 'My child is very happy at school, is well stimulated and has the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities.'

The school is well led by senior staff. The headteacher leads the school particularly well, has a clear vision and capacity to take all the staff together to support new initiatives. The school is not afraid to grasp a new venture in order to improve pupils' progress. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation is particularly accurate. This means that the school is always looking to evaluate the impacts of changes and decide whether they are worthwhile or not. The school is well placed to improve further and recognises that one of the challenges is to find ways of reliably measuring improvement in all aspects of its work.

Over the last two years the school has adopted the 'International Primary Curriculum' (IPC). This initiative is part of a school policy to make the curriculum as interesting and varied as possible so that pupils engage to the maximum in their studies. Older pupils for example, have studied world leaders and written interesting pieces about several of them for a class display. Topics start with catalysts, such as a visit to a circus or to a rainforest at Kew Gardens. This approach captures pupils' imaginations and the work that follows involves them in independent research. All pupils asked said that they enjoyed their lessons. The IPC supports aspects of the school's work from previous years well, such as the development of thinking skills, which are of value to pupils for the rest of their lives. The school has strong links with another and they share IPC learning resources and training. The school has a particularly positive open-door policy. It welcomes other schools and the new experiences they bring to its pupils, from which they benefit.

The curriculum is excellent. Pupils, when asked to show their favourite pieces of work and to explain why they chose them, brought a very wide range of interesting material. It included a page of fraction sums, a poster about hurricanes, favourite poetry and evidence of the excellent work of the Eco-council. Music, art, a wide range of sports and information and communication technology (ICT) all contribute to pupils' exciting learning experiences.

The school meets the widely varying learning needs of pupils well. There is a high degree of consistency amongst teachers about what good teaching is. The teaching observed was predominantly good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers have agreed a whole school method for making sure that every pupil has work that is difficult enough, but not too difficult for them. Teachers set groups relevant and interesting targets to meet in each lesson and over the year. Pupils receive clear feedback about how they have performed and consequently know what they need to do to improve. The result of this approach is that pupils make good progress in lessons and over time. They also gain a strong sense of personal achievement. This results in excellent behaviour, attitudes and enjoyment of school.

The teaching has a number of other good features. Teaching assistants are a strength of the school and support pupils' learning very well. They fully engage the pupils in their groups by using a series of questions and prompts to support learning. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the adults had a very clear idea of what the next learning point was for each small group. This

led to rapid progress for all. Just occasionally, the tasks for a minority of pupils are not as productive as others.

The school has maintained its good performance since the last inspection. Results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, pupils consolidate their progress and standards of work in English, mathematics and science are above average. The consistently good performance of pupils is the result of well-planned teaching and pupils' strong thirst for knowledge. Standards in writing are slightly lower than in other subjects. The school has clearly identified areas where pupils need to improve, such as in spelling, punctuation and in the complexity of the sentences that they write. Teachers have put into place several initiatives to improve writing. Pupils have journals to complete, which many say they enjoy writing because they have opportunities to record what interests them particularly. A further important initiative is the use of ICT to boost pupils' use of the written word when they communicate with each other. Innovative approaches are being introduced, including the use of e-portfolios and forums on the school's learning platform. Initiatives such as these need time to embed and show positive results.

Pupils who find learning difficult in this inclusive school make good progress, because teachers and their assistants make sure they receive programmes that meet their particular needs. The success of the programmes for pupils means that most reach the expected national standards by the end of Year 6. Teachers keep a close watch on all pupils' progress, and any pupil who is falling behind receives extra attention.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision is well managed and children feel safe and secure. Most children's attainment on entry to Reception is broadly typical of children nationally. Through consistent and well-planned teaching, nearly all children leave Reception at the standards expected of five-year-olds nationally and a minority exceeds them. They make good progress from their starting points. Adults use a wide variety of ways to teach. Children were observed successfully revising letter sounds and shapes in groups and making good progress with their reading skills. Children discovering things for themselves is a strong feature of the curriculum. Children were engrossed in mixing different powders and fluids in the water tray. They watched carefully as the substances changed and said what they looked like. Children show great interest and enjoyment in what they do. Children grow quickly into new routines, such as working on their own and making decisions during some activities. The outdoor area has improved significantly and allows children to work independently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by improving pupils' sentence construction, spelling and punctuation skills.

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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	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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

30 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bramford CofE VC Primary School, Bramford, IP8 4AH

It was good to meet so many of you and to listen to your views. Special thanks go to the group I met after lunch and to those of you I joined in the dining room. This letter is to give you a flavour of what is in my full report. Here are some of the best features of your school.

- You make a good start to your schooling in Reception.
- You make good progress with your work in Years 1 to 6 and reach above average standards.
- The headteacher, teachers and all the staff organise the school well for your benefit.
- You enjoy school very much because teachers and other adults set work that you can do, but also challenges you.
- You find what you study in lessons interesting. The Eco-council is doing a really good job.
- You work hard and behave extremely well.

There is one area that your teachers and I agree needs further work. I have asked that the school continues to give high priority to improving your writing skills. You can help, as you have been doing, by continuing to work hard to reach your targets.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Roger Fry Lead inspector