

Great Finborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124732
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	315036
Inspection date	9 September 2008
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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)	78
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 Nigel Brown
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Dodd
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Road Great Finborough Stowmarket IP14 3AQ
Telephone number	01449 613208
Fax number	01449 613208

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The following areas were inspected in detail:

- Standards and achievement in mathematics.
- Pupils' reading and writing skills.
- Creativity in the curriculum.
- The work of the subject leaders.

Teaching, learning, pupils' personal development and systems to provide pupils with academic guidance were also inspected. Other aspects of the school's work were not looked at in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report. Observations of lessons and pupils' work, discussions with the headteacher, governors and pupils, the parental questionnaires and school self-evaluation documents provided inspection evidence.

Description of the school

This is smaller than average village school. Attainment on entry to Reception is broadly typical for children of this age. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average; but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and none are at the early stages of learning English. The headteacher took up his post just over a year before the inspection. Awards achieved include the recently gained Healthy Schools Status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Children achieve well and attain above average standards in this good school. Pupils' personal development, the curriculum, partnerships with others and the personal care shown for all pupils, are outstanding features of this school. Parents are very happy with what the school is doing for their children, both in terms of academic and personal achievement. One parent writes 'For the last five years my three children have been coming to this school and it just gets better and better every year - a wonderful community school.' This view reflects the many parents' comments accompanying their response to questionnaires sent out.

Standards at the end of Year 2 are steadily improving. In 2007, end-of-key-stage assessments had risen to well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was well above the national average in reading and writing, but similar to those typically seen nationally in mathematics. In 2008, standards continued to improve. Results show well above average standards in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics have improved this year and are above average. Standards at the end of Year 4 are well above the nationally expected level for pupils of this age. They are well above those nationally expected in reading and above in writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress through Years 3 and 4 in reading and writing is better than that nationally expected but in mathematics it was a little lower than national expectations. Overall achievement is good. It is excellent in reading and writing and good in mathematics at Key Stage 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4 in order to maintain high standards.

The school has had a strong focus on improving pupils' language skills and has developed very effective systems for tracking and monitoring each individual's progress. This has supported focused teaching and standards have improved significantly in English. Tracking pupils' progress in mathematics is not as well developed because systems were introduced for mathematics later and, consequently standards are not as high as in English. Otherwise, the academic guidance pupils receive is good. Pupils have suitable targets, of which they are aware and which guide their work. They know how well they are doing, but the quality of marking of their work is not consistent across the school. At its best, it informs pupils what they have done well and what they could improve.

Teachers, effectively supported by competent teaching assistants, make lessons interesting and ensure that pupils are active participants in their learning. As a result, pupils of all ages are enthusiastic learners and enjoy school immensely. Attendance has improved over recent years and is now above average. Pupils are confident learners; tasks are challenging and because teachers know pupils as well as they do, they match learning activities accurately to individual pupils' needs. During lessons, pupils are fully engaged in learning and behaviour is exemplary. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are of a high quality. Pupils care for and help each other and they say they feel exceptionally safe and extremely well cared for at all times.

The school is at the heart of this rural community. It has very strong links with the local church and village, other surrounding schools and with projects overseas, ensuring the pupils' awareness of world-wide issues. These links enrich the curriculum immensely and help make the quality and range of learning opportunities outstanding. Leaders of the school, including the governors, are determined that pupils at Great Finborough will have as wide a range of experiences as

they can possibly provide, to ensure a deep understanding of the wider world outside of their locality. This helps support their excellent spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

As well as promoting their academic development, the curriculum provides exceptionally well for pupils' creativity and personal and cultural development. It is rich in the arts. Visiting artists help pupils achieve high standards in their artwork. Standards in music are good. Specialist teachers teach music; singing is exceptionally good and all pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to play the violin. The school's membership of the Sports Partnership opens up a host of opportunities for pupils to take part in wide range of sports under expert guidance. The school has also made links with 'Kids Klub' to provide sports such as archery. The school is rightly proud of its 'Forest Schools' initiative. Pupils who take part enjoy it greatly and their parents comment on how pleased they are that their children are able to take part. Currently, it focuses on Reception and Year 1 pupils, but the school fully intends to extend these opportunities to all pupils. The Reception teacher has accreditation to lead this provision through professional training. It is all about developing social skills, independence and confidence. Activities initially take place on the school site, but when pupils are ready, they go to nearby woodland. They build dens and campfires, which they use for cooking and sit around to sing songs. This makes a significant contribution to their personal development and helps them appreciate and care for the countryside. In all of this type of activity, the school's excellent level of pastoral care, support and guidance is evident.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Since joining the school just over a year ago, the headteacher has made an excellent start in moving the school even further forwards. He has quickly gained the respect of the staff, pupils, governors and parents, and has established close teamwork. He is central to the improved monitoring and evaluation process, supported well by those with responsibility and the subject leaders whose work is very effective. Effective school self-evaluation provides a clear picture of its performance and areas for development. The headteacher, those with responsibility and governors know the school well and share a clear vision of its future. Bearing in mind the recent improvement and the clear identification of what still needs to be done, the school has a good capacity to move from strength to strength.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There are highly effective processes in place to ensure children have a very smooth start to their school life. Close links with pre-school settings provide opportunities for children to familiarise themselves with Great Finborough Foundation Stage before starting. They settle into school quickly and begin learning from an early age. They make consistently good progress across all the areas of learning and development, and exceed the expected goals. They achieve exceptionally well in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they move into Year 1, the vast majority of pupils are working comfortably within the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Time spent in Reception is interesting and enjoyable. Days are structured well, providing a good balance between teacher-led activities and those that children choose for themselves. To support these activities, the accommodation is well organised into different learning areas. However, there is no covered area outside, which places some restriction on learning out of doors when the weather is poor. The school is aware and there are plans to provide cover in the near future.

Children's independence is fostered very effectively, and there is always the watchful eye of the teaching team, to ensure high levels of welfare, care and safety and to encourage children

when necessary. The provision is led and managed well, and children's progress is monitored carefully so that they all move on well in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve procedures to monitor and track pupils' progress in mathematics, so that their achievement is as good as it is in reading and writing, particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- Make sure that the quality of marking of pupils' work is consistent throughout the school so that it informs them of what they need to do to improve their work further.

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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?	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	2
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?	1
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	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

10 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Finborough CE Primary School, Stowmarket, IP14 3AQ

Thank you all for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. With your help, I managed to find out a lot about your school. What I saw impressed me. I enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, visiting lessons to watch you work and speaking to you to find out what you think about the school and how you contribute to make it a very enjoyable place to be. Those of you I spoke to enjoy school very much. I was extremely impressed by the contacts your school has with other organisations and the opportunities for you to reach out into the wider world through supporting schools overseas.

You go to a good school. Your headteacher and all the adults working with you are working well to provide you with a good education. The quality of teaching is good and the learning opportunities provided by the school are excellent, especially those provided by the 'Forest Schools' initiative, which those of you taking part thoroughly enjoy. You all make good progress in your lessons and reach high standards in a wide range of subjects. I was very impressed by the artwork on display and I thought your singing in assembly was excellent. Progress in mathematics though, is not as good as in English. I am therefore asking the staff and governors to help you achieve as well in mathematics as you do in English. The quality of care shown for you is excellent and many of you copy this example by caring for other children in a very impressive way. You help to make others feel safe in school and enjoy being there very much. I think your behaviour is excellent.

I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman

Lead inspector