

Capel St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124749
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	315043
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	284
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 Brian Marr
Headteacher	Miss N Sirett
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Street Capel St Mary IP9 2EG
Telephone number	01473 310386
Fax number	01473 312297

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school serving a relatively advantaged area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and live in Capel St Mary or a few villages beyond. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children's skills are similar to those expected for their age when they enter the Nursery. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special need is double the national average. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Through a private provider, the school offers a breakfast and after-school club.

The school is a training partner for several providers of initial teacher training.

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. Central to its success is the headteacher's outstanding leadership and clear vision for a school where pupils feel secure, self-confident and achieve well. Staff and governors share this vision, so that very strong teamwork is a feature of the school. Therefore, there is good capacity for further improvement.

Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively to plan a demanding curriculum that matches their pupils' interests and abilities. They have a good understanding of pupils' capabilities and provide a variety of interesting activities. These challenge them and encourage them to be creative and independent. Consequently, pupils really enjoy school and all it has to offer and demonstrate this with their enthusiasm for learning and good attendance. One parent commented, 'A wonderful school in which both my children thoroughly enjoy themselves.' Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their moral and social development is excellent but they do not have enough opportunities to develop a good understanding of cultures other than their own. Pupils are confident to voice their opinions. Though they think bullying happens very occasionally, pupils have no doubt that should they have any worries, an adult will help them. Behaviour is good and, in lessons in Year 1 and 2, it is excellent. Older pupils make a good contribution to school life and the wider community, taking on responsibilities in classes and the school with great enthusiasm.

Standards are above average except in information and communication technology (ICT) where they are similar to those expected. The school recognises that more needs to be done to raise attainment in this subject by linking ICT with other subjects. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and often outstanding. Relationships are excellent. Good care, guidance and support for all its pupils underpin their success. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is used most effectively to check that pupils are doing as well as possible in English and mathematics and also to target those needing extra help with learning. Consequently, these pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points and have very good self-esteem.

Leadership and management are good. The findings from analysing pupils' progress are used rigorously to set challenging targets for improvement. For example, the school has successfully raised standards in mathematics and knows that more needs to be done to raise standards further in writing for older pupils. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of its strengths and areas to improve. School improvement planning is thorough with a clear focus on ensuring pupils' success, not only academically, but also in their personal development. The school contributes well to community cohesion particularly within its own community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There are three intakes to the EYFS each school year, which means that the youngest children have only one term in the Reception class before starting in Year 1. The EYFS provides a secure and challenging environment so that children settle quickly and happily into school. Their personal and social development is excellent. Staff look after children with utmost care and attention and children feel safe. Teaching is good in the Nursery and outstanding in Reception. Children thoroughly enjoy learning because they are provided with good opportunities to explore and discover for themselves; for example, waiting for an anemometer to be moved by the wind. Adults make careful observations of what children know and can do and plan work

that is matched closely to their interests and learning needs. In Reception, teaching is challenging so that children have to think hard; for example, when doing 'research' about leaves, children were encouraged to look at leaf veins, compare leaves and record their findings.

There is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by children. The stimulating outdoor learning environment is used to good advantage. Achievement is good because very good links are made between the different areas of learning. By the end of Reception, most children reach the expected standards in all areas of learning and, in some years, a good number exceed these. A strength of the provision is that children develop very positive and confident attitudes to learning. Letter sounds are taught well in Reception and children are expected to have a go at using the sounds they know to help them write. The EYFS leader provides excellent leadership and management. As an outstanding practitioner, she provides an excellent role model for staff. Teamwork is clearly evident in the good ongoing development of Nursery provision. Very good links are established with parents through open days and parent consultation meetings. They are welcomed warmly into school, and encouraged and guided to contribute to their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in ICT and make better use of it within other subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop a better understanding of cultures other than their own.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

At the end of Year 6, in national tests, pupils attain consistently above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school's tracking system and provisional national test results in 2008 indicate that this trend has continued. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in 2008 increased significantly in mathematics because of the measures put in place to raise standards. More able pupils do well in all subjects. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards are above average.

The school has identified that pupils can do better in ICT. It has already increased the number of computers and put staff training in place but these measures have yet to have an impact on standards. The school has maintained its good provision for pupils who need extra help with learning so that these pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and have very good self-esteem.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. In religious education, pupils gain a sound knowledge of several religions but their understanding of how beliefs influence how people choose to lead their lives is limited. There are excellent relationships between the pupils and adults and amongst the pupils themselves. As a result, they are able to learn productively in groups, where their good communication skills come into play. Pupils contribute very well to the life of the school and the wider community, for example, as playground leaders, 'buddy group' leaders and school councillors. Many organise fundraising events for charities and assist with the school fair. Some charity work has a particular focus when Year 5 pupils raise funds to provide water filters in Mozambique. Pupils are very aware

of the need to eat healthily and to adopt healthy lifestyles. They also understand the need for physical exercise, with many taking part in the wide range of after-school and competitive sporting activities. Excellent social skills, together with good standards of literacy and numeracy, prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, with a good proportion that is outstanding. Pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. Most lessons move at a brisk pace because of vibrant teaching and, in particular, the very effective and innovative use of interactive whiteboards. Teachers make good use of assessment data to ensure that activities match the needs of all ability groups and use questioning very effectively to establish understanding. In outstanding lessons, there are good opportunities for pupils to learn independently and to assess the quality of their own work and that of others. The quality of marking is good and pupils are usually told how they can improve and move on to the next steps. Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to pupils' progress and work very effectively in partnership with teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Links between subjects are exploited very effectively to make learning relevant. These links are better for Years 1 and 2, where staff have been planning these links for longer. The impact can be seen in the exceptionally high standards in writing attained by Year 2 boys in 2008. The curriculum is enhanced by the addition of French at Key Stage 2. Pupils' personal development is strongly supported by assemblies, a comprehensive programme of personal, health and social education and by the addition of philosophy to the curriculum. ICT is used to good effect in helping pupils with specific needs to practise and reinforce mathematical concepts. The use of visiting specialists in areas such as dance, drama, football and music enhances pupils' learning. There is a good range of additional clubs and activities including residential trips in Years 5 and 6. These help pupils to develop skills of independence and a greater sense of maturity which promotes their readiness for transition to the next stages of their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a strong caring ethos, evident in all that the school does. One parent said 'Great staff, and a lovely, warm atmosphere.' There are robust systems in place for safeguarding pupils. Managers go to great lengths to elicit the views of pupils and to act on them. Through, for example, taking a very active part in 'Anti-bullying Week' pupils have a good understanding of the impact of bullying. In and out of lessons, there is strong focus on promoting confidence and self-esteem. Pupils get good support and guidance in their work. Their progress is tracked and regularly monitored so that teachers can provide appropriate challenge and underachievers are identified early. Highly proficient teaching assistants, under the guidance of the special educational needs coordinator and outside specialists, run and review specialist programmes of work for pupils with high levels of need. Consequently, good progress is ensured and pupils have good self-esteem. There are good links with the main secondary school to ensure a smooth transition for pupils of all abilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has maintained her 'very good leadership and clear vision for the future' from the last inspection. Staff morale is very high. Good management systems are in place so that the school has a good understanding of what it does well and what it needs to do to improve. The school's pupil progress tracking system is thorough and used highly effectively to identify insufficient progress. Measures are implemented to address weaknesses, often drawing on the good links with other schools and the local authority. Monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and rigorous and teachers are helped to improve their practice, resulting in higher standards.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. Under the excellent guidance of their headteacher, members of the senior management team have a good understanding of how to drive forward improvement. Although the structure of the senior leadership team is relatively new, members are using professional development courses to enhance their effectiveness in their roles. Through their own practice, they provide excellent role models for staff. Governance is good. Governors know the school well and gain a good understanding of what goes on in it through a programme of regular, focused visits. They are not afraid to question to see if the school can do even better.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Parents are strongly encouraged and supported to be involved with their child's education. Interesting topics and a residential visit where pupils learn about life in a developing African country help them develop a sound understanding of cultures other than their own. Links with other schools have a particularly good impact on the provision for more able pupils. Links with teacher training programmes widen staff's professional development.

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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?	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?	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?	1

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Capel St Mary C of E (VC) Primary School IP9 2EG

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. Like you, we think it is a very friendly place to be and you get on very well together. Our particular thanks to those of you who kindly gave up part of your lunchtime to talk to us. We found what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you my findings.

This is a good school. We could see why you really enjoy school, particularly when we saw the interesting lessons you have and the good range sporting activities, visitors and other opportunities the school provides. You said that the teachers are nice and everyone is friendly. Teaching is good and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. Your reading, writing and maths are better than many children your age and you make good progress because teachers keep a close eye on how well you are getting on.

Your headteacher and senior teachers provide good leadership. I have asked them to do two things to make your school even better.

- To help you make even better progress in ICT.
- To give you more opportunities to learn about cultures other than your own and how different beliefs influence the way people live their lives.

This is a good school, not only because of what the adults bring to it, but also because of your contributions. You are very positive about learning and we were very impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector