

# Chelmondiston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124755
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	315045
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	115
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Kerry Gibbings
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Hayward
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Woodlands Chelmondiston Ipswich Suffolk IP9 1DT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01473780576
<b>Fax number</b>	01473 780576

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves the village of Chelmondiston and surrounding area. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The majority of the pupils are of White British backgrounds with a small proportion from other ethnic groups. Few have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have additional learning needs is below average. Attainment on entry to the school varies widely due to the small year group size but overall is typically in line with that expected. The school has Healthy School accreditation and an Activemark award. The Headteacher took up post just over one year ago.

## 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 a number of significant strengths. The school's detailed self-evaluation, although overly modest in parts, reflects accurately the priorities seen as appropriate for further improvement and these are supported by the inspection findings. The strengths of the school are recognised overwhelmingly by the parents. One wrote that 'not only has my son's level of academic achievement improved but his confidence and enjoyment of school are vastly greater.' This view is supported by many other parental comments and by the evidence gathered during the inspection.

The school is successful in part because the headteacher provides very strong leadership that is focused on raising standards. The school staff work exceptionally well together and make a strong team. New ideas and methods are tried out willingly and accepted if they prove appropriate. The governing body has always supported the school and is now more involved in monitoring what is provided through an effective system of visits. The school has developed outstanding partnerships with a wide range of people and organisations to enrich and extend pupils' learning. The excellent improvement made since the last inspection, and further improvements made since the headteacher took on the role, show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Teaching and learning is often good and occasionally outstanding. This results in pupils making good progress as they move through the school. Achievement is good and from their attainment on entry, pupils often reach standards that are above average, especially in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in speaking and writing are more inconsistent and remain an area for improvement, especially for the boys. The pupils who find learning difficult or who have emotional or behavioural difficulties make good progress due to the support they receive. The school is very inclusive. The strongest teaching helps pupils learn through challenging activities and good opportunities for them to work together, co-operate and collaborate. This is very effective in helping them become fully prepared for the next stage in their education, and for their future lives. Relationships are very positive and pupils' behaviour is excellent. This also supports their learning by making it easier for the teachers to teach them. Teaching assistants provide excellent support for teachers and for individual pupils. The good curriculum is very well enriched to provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their learning and make it more relevant. However, there are times when the planning misses opportunities to create more effective and creative cross-curricular links or to develop pupils thinking and problem solving skills.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the excellent care, and academic and pastoral support provided. Pupils clearly enjoy school greatly and say there is no bullying and they feel safe. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives. There are adults they trust and would talk to if worried. The school meets all the expected safeguarding requirements. The headteacher has devised very effective systems for tracking pupils' progress so that any underachievement can be quickly recognised and appropriately addressed. Challenging targets are set for individuals as well as for year groups, and these are often met due to the good provision.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led and organised and provides children with a positive start to their education. Although their overall attainment on entry is broadly that expected, children often have good personal, social and emotional development. This is shown in the rapid way in which they settle at school and by their positive attitudes towards learning. However, a significant number have much weaker communication, language and literacy skills and this has a negative impact on their speaking and writing higher up the school. The teaching is at least good and, at times, outstanding, and this helps children make good progress. By the end of the Reception year most have achieved the expected learning goals. Those with learning or behavioural difficulties are very well supported and because of this, they make good progress. The opportunities children have to work alongside older pupils helps provide sufficiently challenging work for the more able. The outdoor accommodation remains an area for improvement and the school has appropriate plans in place to develop this.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking skills and the standard of their written work.
- Ensure that planning makes effective use of cross-curricular links and provides sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' creativity and thinking skills.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception year and many reach the levels expected by the end of the year, although some remain below average in aspects of their speaking and writing. Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and the most recent national assessments showed Year 2 pupils to be above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils are close to maintaining those levels although weaknesses remain in writing, especially regarding punctuation and spelling.

Progress through Key Stage 2 is variable but good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, good in Year 5 and excellent in Year 6. In 2007, the national tests showed that standards in English and science were exceptionally high, and above average in mathematics. The current Year 6 are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them in all three subjects, although standards in writing remain a weakness. The school recognises the need to improve the consistency of the progress in Key Stage 2, but the overall achievement in the school remains good.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they clearly enjoy many aspects of school life. Their attendance is very high and exceeds the target set. Pupils behave outstandingly well in and out of lessons, and they make an exceptional contribution to their own and the wider community. For example, a number of the school's clubs are run and organised by pupils. Older children have a wide range of opportunities to show responsibility by, for example, working with younger children. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including while using the Internet. Excellent personal and social

development is evident through sessions such as that in Years 3 and 4 on resisting temptations led by a higher level teaching assistant.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The teaching is consistently good and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers and other adults have very good relationships with pupils. The school makes very effective use of a range of parental help in lessons to support small groups. The teaching assistants provide outstanding support, especially for those pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. Teachers plan lessons well for mixed age classes and for a wide ability range. Marking of work varies. It can be very informative and help pupils improve but this is inconsistent. The clear explaining of tasks is one of the teachers' strengths and this helps pupils understand exactly what they are to learn. However, these objectives do not always form an important part of the session at the end of lessons when the whole class gets back together.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and planned appropriately for the age and ability of the pupils. All statutory requirements are met and the school has introduced French in Key Stage 2. There are examples of work where cross-curricular links have been effective in supporting pupils learning. However, these remain inconsistent and opportunities to plan tasks that will develop pupils' thinking and problem solving, and their creativity are missed. Even so, the curriculum is enriched very well through a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors. For example, the recently held arts week has resulted in the production of some high quality two-dimensional and three-dimensional work. The provision for pupils who find learning difficult, and those who are among the gifted and talented, is good and supports their progress well.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school's self-evaluation of this aspect as good is modest as it is a major strength and has a very positive impact on standards and achievement. The school has robust arrangements to ensure health and safety procedures, risk assessments, and racial equality. All requirements for checking the suitability of adults working with children are met. The school has a very good system for tracking pupils' progress and this is being used very effectively to identify quickly and accurately individuals or groups of pupils who would benefit from extra support or challenge. Target setting is excellent; it is challenging but realistic and helps pupils' understand how they can improve. Parents say that this is a very caring school and they are confident, and the inspection findings agree, that the school does all it can to help pupils achieve their best as well as developing a lasting enjoyment of learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Since taking up the post, the Headteacher has provided the school with strong, well-directed and closely focused leadership. She has the clear aim of raising standards and making achievement more consistent throughout the school. Together with the staff and governing body, a very good start has been made on doing this. Subject leadership is effective and more consistent now that the tracking of pupil progress, although in its early stages, provides better information about how well pupils are doing, especially in English, mathematics and science. The provision for pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties is well led and managed, and this results in them making good progress. The governing body, together with the Headteacher, have devised a new and very good system for monitoring and reviewing the work of the school. Although it has only recently been introduced, two governors have already spent time very usefully talking to the school council about their role and about how effectively the school teaches pupils about living healthy lifestyles.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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	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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Chelmondiston C of E VC Primary School, Chelmondiston, Suffolk, IP9 1DT.

Thank you very much for the way you welcomed me to your school on my recent visit. It was a real pleasure to meet you and have time to talk to some of you about the school, and the things you like. It was particularly useful for me to meet the school council. I enjoyed having lunch with some of you as well, and again, like your parents, you were all very positive about your time at the school.

I think there are many good things about your school. These are some of them.

Firstly, Miss Hayward and the staff work very hard to help you to learn. They provide interesting things for you to do and you told me how much you enjoy your lessons. You learn to be enthusiastic readers and to be good in mathematics and science. Secondly, your excellent behaviour helps the teachers to teach you and you are very good at helping each other when you have a chance to work in groups. The staff all care for you well and they are very good at seeing how you are doing and providing extra help if you need it. You achieve good standards in reading, mathematics and science. The governors are also involved in finding out how well the school is doing.

To help the school get even better I have asked the teachers to do two things. Firstly, to help you get better at writing and at speaking, so you can talk and discuss your ideas well in a lot of different situations. Secondly, to make sure you have enough opportunities to solve problems, develop your thinking skills, and find more ways for you to be creative in lessons. You can help by keeping up your very good behaviour and by maintaining your excellent attendance.

Many thanks once again for your help during my visit. I hope Year 5 and 6 enjoyed their visit to York - it certainly sounded like it was going to be a great week. Enjoy your time at Chelmondiston and keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector