

Elveden C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124765
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	315048
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Colin Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline Parr
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Rees
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	London Road Elveden Thetford Norfolk IP24 3TN
Telephone number	01842 890258
Fax number	01842 890258

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small village school that takes children from a wide area and a broad range of social backgrounds. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. There is a high level of pupil mobility as several pupils come from the nearby United States Airforce base.

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 that gives good value for money. It provides a caring, supportive Christian ethos, which is valued highly by parents and pupils. This is reflected in the many parents' comments such as: 'This school feels very much like a family'. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership. She has established an effective team of staff and they work well with governors.

The school has a vibrant, happy learning atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school very much, attend regularly and work hard to succeed. Their achievement is good, helped by effective teaching and their enthusiastic approach to work. Standards vary because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group, but are above average overall. The exception to this is in writing where fewer pupils reach above average standards than in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not present their written work neatly and they have limited opportunities to extend their writing skills in a broad range of subjects.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their school, particularly the enjoyable clubs, visits and visitors. They understand well how to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles and participate enthusiastically in sporting activities. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy taking responsibility, such as looking after the resources in the shed at lunchtimes. School councillors talk proudly about their work and would welcome more opportunities to help improve their school.

The teaching is good. The school's strong focus on each individual pupil is reflected in the way staff ensure that every pupil is happy, secure and ready to learn. The headteacher has developed robust systems for tracking each pupil's progress. She shares this information with her staff to identify which pupils need extra support or a greater challenge. Teachers use this information to guide their teaching and plan work that meets pupils' different learning needs. They manage their classes well to ensure that pupils stay focused on their work and, as result, their achievement is good.

All adults know the pupils well and relationships are warm and friendly throughout the school. This promotes a sense of trust so that pupils are confident about approaching an adult if they have a concern. Recent initiatives in target-setting and assessment are not developed sufficiently, so pupils do not have a clear understanding of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work.

The successful partnership between the headteacher, staff and an increasingly effective governing body enables the school to check how well it is doing and how well pupils are achieving. Where a subject leader has evaluated standards and provision within that subject, this has resulted in rising standards, as in mathematics. Opportunities for leaders in other key subjects to evaluate teaching and learning and be responsible for improving weaknesses are not developed enough.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in Squirrel class have a happy and successful start to schooling. Their attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, although it is generally just below national expectations. Children settle quickly and achieve well because of effective teaching and a well-planned, carefully organised range of learning activities. They make good progress and

most attain the nationally expected standards by the time they move into Year 1. Some exceed this level. Very effective use is made of the local forest environment. These outdoor activities are greatly enjoyed by the children. As a result, they make particularly good progress in their social development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children benefit from good individual support from teaching and support staff. They make good progress overall, although the lack of outdoor facilities limits opportunities for children to choose to play outside.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, especially for more able pupils, by improving the presentation of their work and providing more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in a broad range of subjects.
- Improve pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and the steps needed to raise the standard of their work.
- Enable key subject leaders to improve pupils' achievement in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Results at the end of Year 2 over the last three years show improvement, particularly in mathematics and reading. Standards are above average, although attainment in writing is weaker with too few pupils attaining above the national average. Pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 4, standards are above those expected for their age, particularly in mathematics. Pupils develop their handwriting skills successfully but do not use these improved skills to present neat and accurate written work. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities benefit from good support and they make good progress. The more able pupils, and those with particular gifts and talents such as in mathematics, achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development has high priority. Pupils enjoy school very much, get on very well with each other and contribute much to the school and wider communities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The celebration of different cultural traditions and values is a strength. There are good links with other schools and Elveden has gained the International School Award from the British Council. Pupils benefit from regular exercise and enjoy the healthy range of food on offer at lunchtimes. Close links with a local business successfully extends pupils' understanding of the world of work. The school prepares pupils well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan their lessons carefully and match work to the range of pupils' different learning needs, such as when challenging the more able pupils in mathematics. Well-deployed and effective teaching assistants help pupils to be included fully in lessons and achieve well, especially those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Lessons often have a lively start that captures the pupils' interest, although this brisk pace is not always sustained. Teachers' expectations of how pupils' present their work are not consistently high enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned carefully to meet pupils' needs. It is enriched successfully, for example, through a broad range of creative activities. The high profile given to art is evident in the attractive displays of pupils' work. Personal, social and health education is used well to enhance pupils' personal development and their understanding of healthy lifestyles. Strong links with other local schools and the community extend learning opportunities for pupils. For example, working with the Elveden Estate enhances pupils' environmental knowledge and understanding greatly. Basic skills are planned and taught well, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in subjects other than English.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers and support staff know their pupils very well and provide very good individual care and support, for example, for the pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils and their parents value this highly. A parent commented: 'Our children benefit from a happy, caring environment where they learn the importance of Christian values of sharing with and caring for others'. There are secure systems for ensuring pupils' safety and pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school. Guidance to help pupils improve their work is improving but is not consistent. Pupils do not have a secure understanding of their improvement targets. Peer and self-assessment is not established firmly enough to help pupils know what they need to improve, particularly in writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher works closely with staff to assess regularly the progress of each individual pupil. They set targets for pupils to achieve and provide extra support or further challenges when needed. Staff work well together as a team, sharing ideas and information to help pupils achieve well. The monitoring of teaching has helped teachers to improve their skills, although this has not always focused on how well pupils have achieved. Some aspects of effective subject leadership in mathematics have raised standards. However, the role and contribution of key subject leaders are not developed enough. Opportunities for them to look carefully at pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning, and then take the necessary action to deal with any weaknesses are not well established.

Governors work closely with the headteacher and staff. They are supportive and increasingly involved in checking how well the school is doing. Some governors monitor the progress of aspects of the development plan to increasingly good effect. The good team approach and effective leadership are raising standards and have put the school in a good position to improve 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?	2
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	1
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	2
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 the 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

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	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 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

14 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Elveden Church of England VA Primary School, Elveden, IP24 3TN

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you about what you do in school, looking at your work and watching you learn. You clearly enjoy school and, together with your parents, you think that it is a good school - I agree.

I was pleased to see how well you get on together. Your behaviour is good and this means that teachers can get on with the job of helping you learn. It was interesting to talk to school councillors about how they are helping to improve the school.

You told me that you learn a lot in school and enjoy your work, especially the many interesting activities and the different visits and visitors. I think that your learning is good. Your teachers make your lessons interesting and you try hard to do what your teachers ask. Your headteacher and the staff are trying to help you learn as well as possible. I agree with them that you could do even better in your writing. It is pleasing to note that work on this has already started. I think that you need to write more so that you can get really good at it. Try to make sure that your handwriting and your presentation is as good as it is in your handwriting books.

Some of you know what you need to do to improve your work. I have asked the teachers to help all of you to know how well you are doing and what you need to do to raise the standard of your work. I have also asked your school to provide more opportunities for teachers who are responsible for particular subjects to see where they can help you achieve even better.

Thank you again for helping me to find out about your school and I hope that you will continue to be happy and to work hard.

Colin Henderson

Lead inspector