

Surlingham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120855
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327378
Inspection date	4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	86
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 L Jenkins
Headteacher	Ms Catrin Parry-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Walnut Hill Surlingham Norwich Norfolk NR14 7DQ

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	4 June 2009
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Telephone number

01508 538214

Fax number

01508 538214

Age group 4–11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage and investigated the following issues:

- what school data, lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' books tell us about the quality of pupils' learning and their progress over time
- pupils' spiritual and cultural development

what the school's leadership is doing to

- improve standards in English to match those in mathematics
- raise attainment of higher attaining pupils and girls.

Evidence was drawn from the school's self-evaluation, lesson observations, school documentation, discussions with members of the senior leadership team, two members of the governing body including the chair of governors, school pupils and the analysis of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. It serves the villages of Surlingham and Bramerton and other outlying villages. Almost all pupils are White British although there is a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Slightly more pupils join or leave the school at various points in the school year than is customary. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the number with a statement of special educational needs is high. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Attainment on entry varies year-on-year due to the small size of each year group, but is generally above that typically seen. The size and characteristics of each year group show significant variation. The school has attained Healthy Schools status and the Activemark in recognition of its work in promoting exercise and healthy living. It has also gained an Eco award in recognition of its promotion of economic sustainability and an award for its financial management.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Surlingham is a good school. It ensures that pupils develop well academically and extremely well in their personal development. This judgement is reflected in the large majority of parents' questionnaires returned and the many written comments by parents stressing how happy their children are at the school, the progress that they are making, and the care, attention, development and encouragement their children receive. The school has a number of outstanding features and has improved significantly since the last inspection because of the effectiveness of the school's leadership. School leaders have the skills and commitment to improve the school even further, based on good self-evaluation and the careful monitoring of pupils' progress using a wide range of information. The headteacher leads the school very well and is appropriately ambitious for the school and its pupils. Governance is good and is improving further as systems put in place become embedded.

All staff know the pupils extremely well and are very committed to them. This is not simply a product of the size of the school but because adults listen to and value pupils' contributions. Teachers foster pupils' self-esteem, confidence and their individuality extremely well. Child protection and safeguarding of pupils are appropriately rigorous and the school makes excellent use of specialist agencies to support individual pupils. The school is extremely inclusive and staff work hard to remove any barriers to learning. The outstanding curriculum provides extremely effectively for both academic and personal development. There is a strong emphasis on creativity and the school's use of an inquiry approach to learning successfully links subjects together meaningfully and provides stimulating contexts to practise basic skills. The curriculum is enriched by trips and visitors, and international and residential links with other schools foster pupils' awareness of a diverse society particularly well. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on their own and other peoples' lives, helped by the drama work they undertake, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils develop their independent learning skills particularly well, for example in the 'Forest School', and lessons provide wide-ranging opportunities for discussion, research and group work. Lessons are interesting and, as a result, pupils enjoy school and learning a very great deal and this is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils know how to look after themselves very well, including the safe use of the internet, and have an excellent understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and awareness of 'green' issues. They also make an extremely good contribution to the school community through the school council and other responsibilities.

Teaching is good. Classrooms are managed well with teaching assistants providing effective support. Planning is good. Teachers are skilled practitioners and good learning is the result. The school has a relatively large staff for its size, and teachers' expectations do show some variation especially with regard to standards of presentation, pupils' behaviour and rigour in learning. These variations are often minor but currently expectations are not always consistently high enough to make learning outstanding. The headteacher's teaching commitment does not allow her a daily opportunity to visit classrooms and work alongside staff to provide the professional challenge and support needed to refine teaching approaches and to build this high level of consistency. The governors' recognise the importance of this, appreciating the significant improvement in the school's development during the period when she was able to concentrate on her headteacher role. They are seeking to reorder financial priorities to reduce her teaching commitment.

Pupils behave well. The school is warm and friendly, although pupils report occasional instances of 'falling in and out' with each other and occasional acts of unkindness. They were however very confident they could approach an adult if troubled and that teachers would work to sort out their problems. The common theme of the small minority of parents who expressed concerns about the school was related to pupils' behaviour. The inspection evidence did find some variation in pupil behaviour strategies across the school.

Because of the quality of the provision, pupils achieve well and some very well. Standards by the end of Year 2 show an improving trend over recent years and are now well above average. In 2008, they were exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. These high standards are now being built upon effectively across the junior section of the school. In National Curriculum tests in 2008, at the end of Year 6, overall standards were above average and were exceptionally high in mathematics. Test results for 2009 have not yet been returned but school data indicates further improvement. Standards are high in English, mathematics and science. Improving pupils' writing has been a sustained focus in the school and final drafts of written work for this year group are of high quality. Standards in written mathematics are also high with a clear strength in investigative approaches. Pupils are confident and competent in their use of information and communication technology. Higher attaining pupils are challenged and pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the quality of support that they receive. Girls are achieving well. Given their excellent overall personal development and their above average levels of skills, along with the opportunities that they have to assume responsibility and demonstrate initiative, the school lays the foundation for their economic well being and the next steps in their education effectively.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Adults' good relationships and quality of care ensure that children get a good start to their education in the Reception class. Children achieve well so that standards at the end of the year are well above average in all aspects. Early reading and writing skills are taught effectively, as are early mathematics skills. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' phonic skills. Effective liaison with playgroups and home visits ensure that adults in the setting know the children well. A positive partnership with parents is fostered and parents are encouraged to work with their children at the start of the day. Assessment is effectively based on careful observation, which allows staff to evaluate where the child is in its learning and to build on this effectively. Staff work together well and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader is effective and has identified aspects for further improvement. Welfare requirements are met and the curriculum provides a good range of experiences with the 'Forest School' providing a particularly good opportunity for first hand experiences, including developing children's skills in keeping themselves safe. There are plans to roof part of the outdoor classroom area, which will allow it to be better used to extend all six areas of learning. Although children make purposeful choices to consolidate their learning, sometimes adults over-direct what they have to do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities throughout the week for the headteacher to monitor, challenge and support staff in order to:
- refine teaching approaches across the whole school
- build greater consistency in expectations of high quality learning and behaviour.

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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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	1
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	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 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?	1

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	1
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?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Surlingham Community Primary School, Surlingham, NR14 7DQ

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our day with you very much. I enjoyed the Androcles story in assembly. It was a very cunning lion to disguise itself so effectively as a tiger! I also enjoyed the mathematics lesson I saw and I wished I could have spent longer finding out about your work on Boudicca's tomb, which looked fascinating.

This is a good school. It is helping you do well in your work. You are making at least good progress and standards are above those seen in many schools. The school is also helping you develop as young people extremely well. You clearly enjoy learning a great deal because lessons are interesting and you have lots of opportunities to work together, talk and research. The school is clearly fostering your skills so that you are able to learn effectively independently as well as with support. The school is a friendly place and you behave well. You told me that occasionally some of you fall out with each other but it was good to hear that you are confident enough to approach an adult if you are troubled. You make a particularly good contribution to the life of the school. You also have an excellent understanding of how to look after yourselves and what goes to make up a healthy lifestyle. The school is preparing you well for your future school careers.

Teachers know you well and keep a close eye on your progress. They care a great deal about you. Teachers are skilled and your learning is good and with some adjustments, it could become outstanding. I have asked the governors to see if they can find ways in which Mrs Parry-Jones can spend more time on a daily basis being headteacher rather than teaching a class so that she can work with the adults in the school to ensure that everyone shares the same high expectations. The school has come a long way since the last inspection and staff have the skills to improve it even more. If you continue to help by working hard, I am sure that it will.

Sincere good wishes for your future school careers.

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector