

Spixworth Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120896
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327385
Inspection dates	26–27 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	109
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	Mrs Claire Dye
Headteacher	Ms Catharine Smith
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ivy Road Spixworth Norwich Norfolk NR10 3PX
Telephone number	01603 898483
Fax number	01603 893372

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. It has been reorganised, from a first school to an infant school, since the previous inspection. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and none are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year. For some years recently it has been below, but for the current year, it is broadly in line with that expected for children's ages. The school has an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities although this is high in some year groups. Where they occur they mainly concern pupils with moderate learning difficulties, with behavioural, emotional and social development needs, or with speech, language and communication difficulties. An independent pre-school group uses accommodation on the school site. This is managed and inspected separately.

The school has achieved a bronze ECO award, Activemark, the Norfolk staff well-being award and Healthy School accreditation.

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, which is successful because it is well led and managed. The headteacher and governors work together effectively to gain an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Self-evaluation has enabled them, for instance, to identify the need for subject leaders to become more involved in monitoring the provision in their subjects, particularly by refining the current systems and then using assessment information to identify and tackle any variations in achievement of individuals and groups. Following significant staff changes in recent years, a strong staff team is now in place and shows a good awareness of how to improve the school and raise standards further. The enthusiasm and skills of the headteacher, the commitment of the leadership team and the improvements made to the provision since the last inspection all indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils of all levels of prior attainment make good progress from their individual starting points. Achievement is good overall. It is strongest in Reception and stronger in mathematics throughout the school than in reading and writing. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were average at the end of Year 2 in 2008. They are on track to be above average in 2009. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly and are above those expected for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2. The curriculum is good and is based on a good amount of practical tasks that make learning interesting. Teaching and learning are good overall. Where teaching is only satisfactory, activities are too broadly based to challenge every individual. This has been recognised by senior leaders as an area for improvement and is part of the development plan for the forthcoming year.

The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school's work and pleased with the progress their children make. Comments typical of those made in the pre-inspection questionnaire were, 'My child loves school,' and, 'There is a very caring and positive atmosphere in the school and both of my children love attending.' Care, guidance and support are good. Links with the community are good and these have a beneficial impact on pupils' progress. There are strong and effective links with local schools and other agencies. The effective planning of wider international links benefits pupils greatly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is good and their cultural development is excellent. There is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' personal and social skills, which are good. Each individual is valued and staff work well with parents and other agencies to ensure pupils' well-being. As a result, pupils settle into school happily and gain in confidence and motivation. This has a positive impact on the standards they attain. Pupils enjoy lessons and this is reflected in the recent improvement in attendance and by their good attitudes and behaviour. They are friendly and responsive and settle to work with enthusiasm. They successfully learn about staying healthy and keeping safe. Good personal development, together with good progress in literacy, mathematics and ICT, means that pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their learning.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the two Reception classes and achievement is good. Good provision, care and leadership ensure that children settle quickly and become familiar with school routines. The close liaison between school staff, pre-school groups and parents, together with the good sharing of information, effectively ensures that children's first

days in school are happy and fulfilling. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff give particular emphasis to developing personal and social skills and, as a result, children progress well in this aspect of learning. Their behaviour is excellent. Children work and play confidently and happily, cooperating extremely well with each other. Learning is based effectively on practical activities. There are good opportunities, both indoors and outside, for children to learn with enjoyment. Their obvious pleasure in their achievements is reflected in exclamations such as 'I did it! I had an idea!' and 'Red and green make black, look!' Arrangements to ensure the safety of children and the promotion of healthy lifestyles are effective. Staff plan interesting activities to meet children's learning needs and their evaluation of the progress children make is rigorous and accurate. Although children select for themselves from a range of activities, opportunities for them to record and evaluate their choices are more limited. From their starting points, most children in the current year group are on course to exceed the standards expected by the time that they move to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine assessment systems to ensure the collated information is analysed by coordinators so that any variation in achievements can be spotted swiftly and appropriate action taken.
- Require teachers, when planning lessons, to make better use of information about pupils' achievements to match tasks more accurately to individual needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement from the time children start in the school until the end of Year 2 is good. By the time pupils start in Year 1, standards are at or above those expected for their ages in all of the six areas of learning. Historically, standards attained at the end of Year 2 have varied from year to year, reflecting variations in starting points for different groups of pupils. The school has acted to resolve issues in mathematics following the previous inspection by providing pupils with more activities of a practical nature to support their learning about numbers. As a result, pupils now make good progress in mathematics. Pupils who need extra help with their learning receive good support and, as a result, they achieve well. In 2008, standards at the end of the key stage were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 2 are in line to attain standards that are above average in all three areas by the time they transfer to the next school. Resources and provision for ICT have been improved in recent years and standards in this subject are above those expected for pupils' ages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school places a great emphasis on pupils' personal and social development and hence promotes it effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and to keep themselves safe. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Activities such as links with a Zimbabwean theatre group help ensure that pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school because of the interesting work that is planned for them. They say that they all get on well together and that school is a fun place to be. Because of their enjoyment of all the school has to offer, pupils work hard. They make a good contribution to the community through their links with local festivals and their charitable work. Attendance has improved recently and is now above the national average. Pupils with responsibilities, such as school council members, work hard for the school and take their roles very seriously which develops

their understanding of community issues. However, some other pupils are not always absolutely sure what it is the school council does.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and hence pupils learn well. Teaching and learning are consistently good in Reception. Because of improvements made, teaching is also consistently effective in mathematics, enabling pupils to make good gains in their learning. In other subjects, the quality of teaching is a little more variable. All teachers establish good relationships with their classes. They use interactive whiteboards skilfully to explain tasks to pupils and they engage pupils in practical tasks. In these ways, lessons are made interesting and appealing. However, in some instances, the selection of activities is only broadly based on teachers' assessments of how well pupils have been doing. As a result, the level of challenge is not consistently or accurately matched to pupils' needs and, when this is the case, the pace of pupils' learning is only satisfactory. Teaching assistants provide a good level of extra support for pupils who find learning harder, modifying tasks to meet these pupils' needs well. They are particularly good at ensuring that pupils who need extra support are fully integrated with their peers and so enabled to take a full part in all activities. As a result, these pupils learn well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. Planning is now good, enabling relevant links to be made between subjects. Good attention is paid, in class, to showing pupils how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils particularly enjoy music, which is a strong feature of the school, and they sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. Pupils in all year groups have good opportunities to learn in the school grounds and garden areas. A good range of clubs and activities, many of which promote physical fitness, enhances the curriculum for pupils in Year 2. The match of the curriculum to pupils' ages and needs is generally good and particularly so for numeracy and ICT. However, in other subjects such as design and technology it is sometimes only satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils fully meet requirements. Support for pupils who require additional help with their work is good, not least because of the strong links that have been established with specialist agencies. The school takes effective steps to help younger children settle into school and older pupils to transfer to their next stage of education. Day-to-day routines are well established and known to all so that pupils can feel safe and well cared for. Pastoral guidance is good and this contributes to the good personal development and well-being of pupils. Pupils have helpful targets for their personal development, but those for academic aspects are not always made explicit to them. Systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. These are easily interpreted to see what levels pupils have attained, but their use to deduce how much progress pupils are making is more difficult. The current system is

labour-intensive and does not provide information swiftly enough. A new system is at the early stages of implementation.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Overall, school self-evaluation is good. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. Governance is good. Governors are supportive, knowledgeable and effectively hold the school to account. They carry out their role of critical friend effectively. Consolidation of those aspects of the school that were already strong, such as the school's involvement with and its impact on the local and wider community, has had a positive influence on pupils' learning and personal development. It has also promoted good community cohesion. Plans to widen these community links are exciting and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. Some subject coordinators are relatively new to their post and are at an early stage of monitoring progress in their subject across the whole school. The headteacher has already identified the need to refine the system whereby those with management responsibility can quickly evaluate the progress of individuals and groups.

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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?	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	3
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	2
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

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

2 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Spixworth Infant School, Spixworth, Norwich, NR10 3PX

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. A special thank you to those of you who talked to me at lunchtime and to those who showed me your school website. You helped me to learn a lot about your school.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- Ms Smith and the governors know you all well. They know what the best things are about your school and what to improve next.
- Everyone in the school takes good care of you.
- You are taught well and this helps you to make good progress in your learning.
- You all behave well and Reception children behave excellently.
- You make excellent progress in learning about your own and other cultures.
- You thoroughly enjoy the way teachers plan practical tasks in lessons to help you understand things better, such as lessons outside.
- Your parents are positive about the school.

We have asked the school to make a few improvements by:

- asking the teachers who are in charge of subjects to become more involved in measuring how much progress you are making
- asking your teachers to make sure the things they plan for you always match what you need to learn next, as well as they do in the best lessons.

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Spixworth and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector