

Overstrand, the Belfry, Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121123
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327410
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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 aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	105
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 Gordon Partridge
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Brooks
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cromer Road Overstrand Cromer Norfolk NR27 0NT
Telephone number	01263579275

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school is situated on the edge of the village of Overstrand on the North Norfolk coast. Pupils come from the village and neighbouring areas. A few pupils attend for a very short time because of their parents' work patterns and because some parents move into the area and only stay briefly. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few pupils have English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but a higher than average percentage of pupils has a statement of special educational need. Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills, knowledge and understanding above the levels expected for their age. The school has close links with the Church. It is working towards Healthy Schools' status and holds the Investors in People award. The school is newly built, but the landscaping of the grounds has yet to be completed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Overstrand, the Belfry, Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory education within a caring and attractive environment. Strong links with the church and the promotion of Christian values make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Parents feel their children are well cared for and pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have very good attitudes to their work. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. However, some teachers do not make the most of their talents by encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for planning and checking their work, and setting personal targets.

There have been challenges to the leadership over the last few months, with the secondment of the deputy headteacher to another organisation for four days a week. This has not affected the school budget and financial management is good. Governors have appointed an experienced teacher to assist in school improvement but he has not been in post long enough to have had an impact. Nevertheless, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Provision for physical education, and information and communication technology (ICT) is now satisfactory. Most parents feel that they are well informed about their children's education and the parents' association supports the school well. There is now a school council, although pupils do not yet manage this themselves. There is some monitoring of teaching and learning, but this does not clearly identify areas for development to be followed up during the next monitoring session. As a result, although there are pockets of good practice, teaching and learning remain satisfactory.

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, most normally attain above average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science are average. The small cohorts result in swings in overall performance and in 2008, there was a dip in standards in Year 6. Over half of these pupils were not present in the school during Key Stage 1. The pupils clearly made satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 2, and overall the profile of attainment of last year's Year 6 was mostly average through Key Stage 2. However, there was some uneven progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are conscientious about planning the curriculum in line with national guidance. However, there are few links between subjects to make learning relevant. Some mathematics and science lessons rely too heavily on mechanical tasks rather than investigation or practical enquiry. Good relationships and effective questioning ensure pupils learn. While there are examples of teachers planning work with plenty of challenge for all abilities, this is by no means common practice. The quality of teachers' marking is still too variable and often pupils are not given written advice about how to improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and there is satisfactory potential for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education. Very good relationships with parents ensure that adults in school have the information they need to enable them to respond to individual needs. As a parent said, 'The adults are a good team who have created a very relaxed and comfortable

environment for the children.' Although most children were very new to school during the inspection, the teacher planned activities that closely matched each child's stage of development. For example, the 'postman' brought letters for groups of children. Some contained individual letters while others had whole words. Children worked together well to identify letter sounds and the most able read some of their words.

Children's behaviour and attitudes to each other are impressive given their short time in school. Most are confident speakers who listen well. They enjoy their teacher's enthusiasm and eagerly join in action songs. Photographs taken over the year show children learning through a range of interesting and practical tasks.

The good curriculum, including outdoor learning, enables children to develop skills effectively across all areas of learning. Adults are actively campaigning for a shelter, which will allow children to use the patio in all weathers. Good systems for tracking children's progress and careful record keeping ensure a smooth transition to the next stage in their education. There are high levels of care and children are encouraged to evaluate how easy or hard they found their tasks. However, most activities are planned by the teacher, missing opportunities for children to initiate their own learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the monitoring of teaching to ensure that areas for improvement are identified and acted upon.
- Make sure all teachers have consistently high expectations of their pupils and plan work that challenges the full range of abilities within the class.
- Ensure all teachers' marking gives clear advice about how pupils can improve their work, and pupils are involved in evaluating their learning and setting their own targets.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn through investigation and enquiry, especially in mathematics and science, and to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Almost all children leave the Foundation Stage having met, or exceeded the expectations for their age. In the 2008 national tests and tasks, more seven-year-olds than average attained the expected levels for reading, writing and mathematics. However, fewer than average reached the higher levels. Although pupils' achievements are satisfactory, the outcomes indicate that there is some lack of challenge, especially for the more able. The school has successfully addressed previous weaknesses identified in standards in writing through Key Stage 2. The school's tracking shows that the majority of pupils made satisfactory progress through the key stage, even though the school's results for these pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average. Of the fourteen pupils in Year 6 in 2008, seven of the cohort had joined the school after Year 2 and the profile of the group, as it moved through Key Stage 2, was one of mainly average attainment. The tracking also shows some uneven progress as pupils move through the school. Optional tests at the end of Year 5 show that the present pupils in Year 6 are working

at above average levels. The school has indentified the need to develop pupils' investigatory skills in science and the use and application of mathematical skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a strong understanding of right and wrong and show impressive consideration for the needs and feelings of others. Lively and thought-provoking assemblies encourage them to reflect on issues that impact on their lives. Through the personal, social and health education curriculum, they have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and of environmental issues. They participate enthusiastically in the range of sporting activities available to them. They enjoy school and work hard, although in some classes the pace of lessons and activities lacks sufficient challenge to generate their best efforts. Attendance is satisfactory. Many families are linked to the tourist industry and cannot take holidays during the high summer season. Pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of other cultures through the curriculum and events such as 'Black History Week.' Pupils carry out their duties conscientiously. The school council gathers pupils' views and is beginning to have an impact on school development. Pupils develop satisfactory skills to prepare them for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teachers create an attractive environment and question pupils well, often providing opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion with their peers. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum although some lack the confidence to encourage pupils to experiment and extend their learning. Some rely too heavily on worksheets for pupils to record their work, missing opportunities for their class to practise and apply their skills. Learning accelerates in lessons where the teacher generates a rapid pace and adapts the lesson in response to pupils' learning. Teaching assistants regularly liaise with the teachers and provide sound additional support for pupils who need it. Their effectiveness is occasionally limited because of the repetitive tasks planned for some of the pupils they work with. While there are examples of very effective marking, which identify the strengths in pupils' work and suggest ways to make it better, too often any comments are restricted to praise. In some mathematics books, for example, worked is marked incorrect with no comment about where the pupil went wrong.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets national requirements for all subjects. ICT provision has improved with better resources and the specialist teaching by the headteacher. There is scope for much more planned use of ICT within other subjects. There is an appropriate range of additional clubs and activities to enhance pupils' learning experiences. An art week, for example, involved visiting artists working with the pupils, providing good opportunities for them to improve their skills. The school ensures that pupils learn how to take care of themselves. There is now good provision for physical education, including a range of sporting opportunities. Older pupils learn French. The new hall and extensive field are impressive and used to the full. Curriculum planning is satisfactory but misses opportunities to link subjects to make learning more relevant.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides very good pastoral care for its pupils. All procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their safety are met. Any accidents are recorded and parents informed. Good liaison with parents ensures pupils' medical or social needs are accommodated. Pupils who have additional learning difficulties are identified and individual education plans are appropriately drawn up to support them. Outside agencies support when this is required and there are satisfactory links with the providers of services. Overall, however, the quality of academic guidance is variable, and sometimes inadequate. This means that pupils are often unable to make full use of their skills to improve their learning. Where no written advice is given, pupils are unable to learn from their mistakes. Nor can they see how their work has improved. Most pupils have curriculum related targets but few have targets related to their specific learning or the opportunity to set their own targets based on the outcomes of their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a sound understanding of the quality of provision within the school. He is conscientious in his efforts to maintain staff morale and to address their training needs. Mixed aged classes and some job sharing make planning challenging but the school makes sure that all pupils have appropriate access to the curriculum. As there are few teachers, several have a range of responsibilities. Although they have an impact on curriculum planning, few monitor the quality of teaching and learning for their subjects. However, leaders are beginning to use the school's effective tracking systems to set targets, and identify pockets of underachievement. For example, analysis of test results has shown that more able pupils are not achieving as well as they could. There are increasing links with other schools and regular musical or dramatic performances for parents and the community. Community links are strongest in the Foundation Stage, where children liaise with a school in Kenya. Governors know the school well. They are supportive but have yet to develop their monitoring role.

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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

22 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Overstrand, the Belfry Church of England Primary School, Overstrand, NR27 0NT

Thank you all very much for your help and support during my visit to your school. I really enjoyed meeting you all and hearing your views. A special thanks to the team captains who spoke to me.

I was very impressed with your excellent behaviour and the way you listened so carefully in your lessons. I can see how hard you work. I was amazed at how the children in Oak class have settled into school after only two weeks or less in school. This is because they are given lots of help and support, and activities that make learning fun. I wonder if the postman will call again. I was glad to hear from all of you that I spoke to that you enjoy school. I have asked your teachers to do some things that will help you enjoy it even more because you will be learning even faster.

I would like your teachers to remember what you are capable of and plan work that gives you plenty of challenge. I know some of you receive wise advice when your work is marked. I want all teachers to give you advice about how to improve. I think that many of you can work out for yourselves what you need to do to make your work even better and I think you should be doing this. You are responsible children and I am sure you would relish the chance to take some more responsibility for improving your work. I have asked your teachers to give you plenty of opportunities to find things out yourselves through investigation and experimentation. Who knows what you may find out! Finally, to help your teachers do these things, I have asked leaders in school to look at the way you are taught and the way you learn so that they can see how well these things are developing.

You have a satisfactory education at the moment and make satisfactory progress. I know that you are capable of achieving much more. Make sure you rise to the challenge! I wish you good luck for the future.

Best wishes

Judy Dawson

Lead inspector