

Wortham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124620
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328180
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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)	64
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 Tina Wilby
Headteacher	Mrs Mary E Perry
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bury Road Wortham Norfolk IP22 1PX
Telephone number	01379 898484
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small rural school serves the villages of Wortham and Burgate. It is housed in a Victorian building with several more recent additions. The playground and grassed areas are extensive. Pupils come from broad social and economic backgrounds. Very few are eligible for free school meals. They are all White British and speak English as their first language. Pupils start school with levels of knowledge and skills that vary from year to year and are generally in line with those expected nationally. A slightly above average percentage has learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at the start of the term that they reach their fifth birthday. They join a class that serves Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The headteacher took up her post in April 2006, which was after the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school is providing an effective education across all aspects of its work. It has moved forward since the last inspection in numerous ways, all of which have added to pupils' enjoyment of school and learning. Good leadership, particularly that of the headteacher, has been fundamental to the continuous improvements and demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement. This is reinforced by the impact of dedicated and knowledgeable governors who confidently challenge the school. The vast majority of parents have expressed their satisfaction with, as one family notes, 'this greatly improved school' and 'its strong community spirit.'

The starting point for pupils' good progress is their strong sense of security, built up from the time that they join the Early Years Foundation Stage. Mixed age classes encourage pupils to look out for each other in an atmosphere of respect and friendship. Backed up by good quality care, support and guidance, both academically and pastorally, pupils become confident learners, in and out of the classroom. Their good attendance and behaviour owes much to the opportunities that the school offers them to develop a wide range of skills in teamwork and making decisions. Often these are in the village, demonstrating the school's attachment to the areas that it serves, through the varied and effective links that it sustains. These are both within the community and internationally. Although pupils' personal development is good, their knowledge and understanding of the multi-cultural society in which we live, is less well developed.

Pupils make good progress through the school, because of good teaching and tasks that engage all. Standards are above average in most year groups although there is some variation from year to year. Progress of pupils is consistently good from their starting points. It is encouraged by improved systems for tracking progress in English, mathematics and science, which subject leaders are using well to gain an accurate knowledge of standards and any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Marking tells pupils very regularly what they have achieved although it does not often enough tell them how to move further forward. All pupils reached the expected levels in 2008 in English, mathematics and science. The proportion reaching higher levels increased from the previous year, although the percentage was lower than that found nationally in English and mathematics. Common strengths of teaching are the positive relationships between staff and pupils, teachers' good subject knowledge and their use of inter-active whiteboards to engage pupils. Planning is usually detailed and offers a range of activities. Tasks for the more able, though, are not always creative enough to extend learning as well as they could, reflected in the percentage reaching higher levels in English and mathematics.

In this small school, the leadership and management has taken well thought out actions to develop numerous partnerships with other schools and the community, to the benefit of the good curriculum. It has resulted in a great range of activities and opportunities in lessons and after school, adding to pupils' enjoyment of learning and enhancing their personal development. Much improved provision for information and communications technology has added a new dimension to learning, enabling pupils to have more ownership of their learning.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good arrangements to get to know them and their parents before they start school. Their personal development is outstanding. It is promoted by well established routines, high expectations by staff and the support and friendliness of older pupils, who learn in the same classroom, and whose good behaviour the children model. Staff use praise well to encourage children to be and do the best that they can. Cross stage organisation enables children to be fully involved in whole school issues and at the same time encourages their progress in the broadest sense. Their feelings of security is reinforced by policies and procedures that help to ensure their welfare and result in a caring and safe environment. For example, they take pride in following fire drill procedures because they understand the importance of keeping safe. Good progress has been encouraged by good teaching and the new outside area, is allowing children to access the full range of activities. There is a good mix of teacher-directed and independent activities which are carefully planned. Assessment of learning, often through play, happens through the day, showing that it is integral to learning. Staff knowledge of the levels at which children are working on entry and the regular recording of their achievements, result in activities which promote quick progress. The good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage promotes confidence and self-esteem in the children, most of whom reach at least average standards for their age, with some exceeding this level. Children are proud of their growing independence and skills for the future, such as those gained by a visit to the village tea shop, where they bought their own bun and drink.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that planning of work for more able pupils focuses on providing greater creativity in the challenge that it offers.
- Make sure that teachers tell pupils the next steps in learning when they mark their work to help them move forward as quickly as possible.
- Provide regular opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to develop their understanding of the multi-cultural world in which we live.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' progress through the school, including those who find learning difficult, is good. Achievement is good in all year groups. The standards that pupils achieve by the end of Year 6 vary from year to year in the small cohorts but in most year groups they are above average. Every pupil in Year 6 achieved expected standards in English, mathematics and science in 2008 and an above average percentage achieved higher levels in science. Whilst tasks are generally adapted to cater for more able pupils, planning is not regularly creative enough to extend their learning as much as it could. Targets are below average for Year 6 pupils in 2009 but the school's tracking indicates that pupils will exceed them at expected and higher levels.

At the end of Year 2, standards also vary from year to year, depending on the nature of the cohort. Key Stage 1 performance in 2008 indicated that standards were below average, particularly in reading and mathematics. No pupils achieved the higher grade. In 2009, standards are on track to be above average in reading, writing and mathematics, demonstrating pupils' good progress from their starting points, due to consistently good teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They enjoy school, behave well and show enthusiasm for involving themselves in a range of activities. Pupils treat each other kindly and cooperate well in teams. Indeed, relationships are a strength of the school and result in all pupils feeling valued for who they are. Attendance is above average. The healthy tuck shop, run by Year 5 and 6 pupils, and regular physical education lessons and swimming encourage pupils to exercise and eat healthily. They feel safe in school and speak knowledgeably about how to stay safe. The school council is one of numerous ways in which pupils develop important skills for their future although it is a developing aspect. Class 3 pupils are proud to be involved in litter collection in the village, developing from a young age their understanding of their responsibilities towards the community. Regular charity fund-raising also involves pupils seeing the benefits of their efforts to the recipients. The development of pupils' knowledge of a multi-cultural society is an evolving aspect of the school's work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, promoting pupils' good progress. Pupils are keen to learn and positive relationships with staff strengthen the learning environment. The purpose of lessons is made clear and regularly revisited. Activities are often interesting and even fun, particularly when they involve problem solving. Sharp questioning in some lessons focuses pupils on the lesson objectives and therefore on their progress. Pupils appreciate being involved in computer-based learning and the increasing use of computers is extending independent learning opportunities. In the best lessons, planning is detailed and provides tasks that match accurately the levels at which pupils work. Sometimes tasks are not carefully enough thought out or creative enough to extend the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it promotes learning and enjoyment well. It has improved since the last inspection in the provision for information and communication technology. Housed in the new study centre, it has resulted in greater opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves. A portable listening centre for Key Stage 1 has also extended pupils' learning opportunities. Although the curriculum is based around literacy and numeracy, it is increasingly in place across subjects. Pupils who find learning difficult and those who are more able are catered for well. A wide range of enrichment activities broaden the curriculum and offer pupils the chance to add to their skills and interests. They include regular specialist music lessons for older pupils. The curriculum is strengthened by the school's good use of links with local primary schools and with the nearby comprehensive school. They all enable broader learning experiences than would otherwise be possible, including in sport. They aid the transition process significantly. Regular visits and visitors, which pupils enjoy greatly, extend pupils' good personal and inter-personal skills. The teaching of French right through the school has added relevance through the link that the school shares with the village.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel happy and secure in school because they are cared for well and supported by staff. The school has the necessary procedures in place to help ensure pupils' health and safety. Staff work effectively with outside agencies to provide help with pupils' social and emotional needs. Parents' satisfaction with the school is strengthened through regular opportunities for them to be involved with the school. For example, the termly 'Share' afternoon, enables families to join in with the learning of pupils.

Academic guidance has developed considerably since the last inspection. Pupils know their targets in literacy and numeracy. Their progress has been strengthened by their involvement in target setting which has given them greater ownership of their progress. The effective development of teaching assistants has led to good support for those pupils who find learning difficult. Individual education plans for them and also for those identified as having particular gifts and talents, are significant in helping them make good progress towards their goals. Marking in literacy and numeracy regularly tells pupils what they have achieved, although there is less emphasis on informing them of their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, has accurately identified the actions needed to move the school forward. Improvements have been continuous, particularly in the accommodation, the provision for information and communication technology, partnerships with other schools and community involvement. A focused school development plan has resulted in an effective concentration on accelerating pupils' progress. This increased rate of progress is on course to be continued in September 2009 when the school will have its full complement of permanent staff in place. Subject leadership has also moved forward, with clear expectations from the headteacher leading to a consistent approach. Consequently there is a greater all-round emphasis on raising standards through the school, with leaders ensuring the accuracy of assessments. The impact of the improvements on pupils' progress is good. Governors steer the school very well through their monitoring of its work and the constant challenge that they provide. This includes their involvement in community cohesion, which is good because of the school's diverse range of partnerships with the local community and internationally.

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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?	1
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?	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**

30 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wortham Primary School, Diss, IP22 1PX

This letter is to thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed my two days with you, particularly when I watched you learn and play. Thank you also to those of you who spent part of your lunch time telling me all about your school. This letter is to tell you the judgements I have made.

Your school is a good school. You agree. You like being there and you learn a lot. You make good progress, with good teaching and support from the staff. The learning centre and new computers are helping you to be more independent in your learning and you appreciate the range of after school clubs and the great choice of visits. Many of you reach standards that are above average by the time that you leave the school.

Your school is a happy place because you get on well with each other and look out for other pupils. You learn many skills through fund-raising and working with the local community. Your close links with the village strengthen the curriculum and your good personal development.

Your headteacher leads the school well. She and the staff want it to be even better. I have asked the staff to make sure that tasks for those of you who are able to reach higher levels are creative enough to extend learning as well as they could. Marking is already good in telling you what you have done well. However, it also needs to tell you your next steps in learning. Your headteacher agrees that the school should provide regular planned opportunities for you to develop an understanding of the multicultural world in which we live.

I hope that you will continue to enjoy school and make the most of the good education that it is giving you.

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector