

Great Barton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124697
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328193
Inspection date	26 January 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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	134
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 Derek Troth
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Rees
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Great Barton Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP31 2RJ
Telephone number	01284 787353

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	26 January 2009
Inspection number	328193

Fax number

01284 787353

Age group 4-9

Inspection date 26 January 2009

Inspection number 328193

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), standards and achievement, aspects of personal development and aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan and other documents; school and external data; observations of lessons; discussions with pupils, the headteacher and Chair of Governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This first school is smaller than average. Approximately two thirds of the pupils are from the village; the remaining pupils come from Bury St Edmunds or the nearby area. The school has a good reputation locally and the EYFS is oversubscribed. Almost all pupils are White British. English is an additional language for a small number of pupils but they are all competent bi-lingual speakers. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage of pupils who find learning difficult is average although the percentage with statements detailing their educational need is a little above average. There has been a recent increase in the number of pupils joining or leaving the school at various points of the school year. The school provides family learning programmes and parental access to support services on demand as part of its extended schools core provision. Most children have pre-school experience before joining the school. There is a separately and privately run local pre-school. This also provides holiday, pre and after school care. Attainment on entry reflects the full range of ability generally seen in children of this age, although a significant minority have delay in their personal development, language and mathematics skills. The school has gained Activemark in recognition of its work in sports and physical education. It has also gained the Financial Management in Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. In assembly, pupils sing one of their regular favourite songs 'One, two three good to be me' with tuneful, happy enthusiasm, united together in a strong school community in which pupils are helped extremely well to develop as young people and learn to feel good about themselves. Personal development and well-being is excellent. The school fosters enjoyment of learning, confidence and self-esteem extremely well because of the rich and stimulating curriculum as well as the very high levels of care, support and guidance provided for them by all adults. Pupils' high levels of attendance reflect their enjoyment of school. Pupils have an extremely good understanding of what makes up a healthy life-style and how to keep themselves safe. Most pupils behave extremely well for almost all of the time because staff are very clear about their expectations and manage behaviour in a calm positive manner. Individual pupils who occasionally find it difficult to manage their behaviour learn to do so over time. Pupils describe the school as 'very friendly' and there is a strong family feel derived from the fact that pupils know each other across the year groups. The result is that pupils feel safe and they are confident to approach an adult if they are troubled. Staff foster pupils' individuality extremely well. The curriculum provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives and the lives of others. International links and developing twinning arrangements with two other English schools with very different characteristics promote this further. Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Through their various roles and responsibilities, pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community.

Children get a flying start to their education in Reception and this exceptional progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2 so that standards by the end of Year 2 are usually very high in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils, who find learning difficult, make exceptionally good progress academically and, where appropriate socially, because of the high levels of very effective support that they receive. The school works extremely effectively to remove barriers to pupils' learning and the school is very inclusive as a result. Pupils capable of high attainment do well because the teaching challenges them appropriately. In Year 3, the rapid assimilation of knowledge and understanding leading to the outstanding achievement characterised in earlier years continues. Pupils absorb and learn to apply that knowledge to the demands of the Key Stage 2 curriculum. This provides the foundation for the work in Year 4 and ensures that standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 4 are consistently very high. Overall, across their time in school, pupils achieve extremely well. This underpins the school's excellent preparation of pupils for the next steps in their education. The good opportunities for pupils to show initiative in their charity fund raising very effectively prepares them for their future economic well-being.

From observing lessons, work scrutiny and careful tracking of pupils' progress, the headteacher has a very accurate view of the quality of pupils' learning and the quality of teaching, which brings this about. Teaching is outstanding. It is never less than good and often outstanding in the way it supports high quality learning. Above all, it is this consistency of high quality teaching across the school that leads to pupils making such good progress. Teachers are very skilled practitioners and manage their classes very effectively to target lessons to meet the needs of all the pupils. Teaching assistants provide excellent support and very strong teamwork is evident. There is a strong focus on developing the quality of pupils' thinking. Teachers are confident enough not to rush, but to give pupils space and time to explore and make their own responses and connections. Teachers react to pupils' responses with genuine enthusiasm and praise and

the dialogue between teacher and pupil is meaningful. Pupils learn the ground rules of classroom discussion and the importance of valuing each other's contribution. 'Good answer,' said one pupil of another pupil's contribution. 'Good support!' was the teacher's immediate reaction. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils; teachers smile in welcome and clearly enjoy working with the pupils. This gives the classrooms warmth, and provides pupils with the security where they can make mistakes. The result is, that, as a group of pupils explained, 'lessons are fun but we learn as well.' Above all, teachers have an excellent understanding of how young pupils learn and take genuine delight in the often, small steps taken by individuals in this process. A huddle of teachers, for example, shared, at the end of the day, pupils' reactions to the cracked 'dinosaur eggs' and the perceptive discovery by one 'archaeologist' of the balloon fragments in their papier-mache construction.

The school has a very good reputation locally. Most of the parents responding to the inspection questionnaire were supportive of the school and many wrote in warm terms about it. The overall excellent aspects of the school's provision and the excellent standards academically and personally, derive from the outstanding leadership and management provided by the headteacher and the strong support by the assistant headteacher and other colleagues. The school has a very professional ethos; staff are reflective and keen to develop their practice through self-assessment, peer observations and professional development. The headteacher has created a strong sense of teamwork across the school, valuing each person's contribution, be it in the office, canteen or elsewhere. The school's work to develop community cohesion is good; the impact of some aspects that have been put in place, such as the twinning arrangements, have still to work through. Child protection, safeguarding and health and safety arrangements are in place. The headteacher uses data very well; targets are challenging. The school's self-evaluation and identification of priorities is extremely accurate and effectively articulated in the school improvement plan. Currently the improvement plan's success-criteria lack precision in how to sharply identify, and where appropriate, quantify, the success of initiatives. Governance is good overall with some outstanding features; some members are relatively new to the role. Members of the governing body participate in training and are modifying and further improving the way they monitor the school. Governors provide both challenge and support. The school has attained the award for financial management in schools in recognition of the efficiency of the financial systems and the effectiveness of the governing body's oversight. The school has undergone very significant improvement across all aspects of its provision since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained by the end of Year 2 and raised by the end of Year 4. This reflects the school's excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The school has established very effective links with the local pre-school and parents and this, with good induction arrangements, ensures that children settle well. Arrangements for children's welfare are excellent. The curriculum correctly focuses very well on children's personal and emotional development and learning through exploration and play, laying the foundation for learning in other areas. Children develop good independent skills and are able to sustain concentration because activities are interesting and motivate the children to learn. There is excellent development of communication, language and literacy skills, particularly in writing. Children are very keen writers because of the encouragement and opportunities the adults provide. Children's overall development in Reception is impressive; gains in learning are excellent because of the overall excellent provision and many children attain levels above those expected

for their age by the time they reach Year 1. Teaching is outstanding. Expectations are high. The teaching assistant is effective and experienced. As with the main school, adults understand how young children learn. Staff recognise children's needs quickly because they track children's progress effectively; they target skilfully opportunities to move them on in their learning and to support those children with learning or other specific needs. Overall leadership and management are outstanding, reflected in the quality of provision and children's excellent progress. Action planning accurately identifies aspects for further improvement including developing further the learning in the outside area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Define more precisely, and where appropriate quantify, the success criteria for the initiatives in the school improvement plan so that the school is very clear about the expected impact of initiatives and when they have been achieved.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

27.01.09

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Barton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Great Barton IP31 2RJ

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school. I very much enjoyed your assembly. Who would have thought that we were made up of all those chemicals? My particular thanks to those pupils who gave up so much of their lunchtime to talk to me. What you had to say was particularly interesting and helpful.

You are clearly proud of your school and so you should be because it is outstanding. It is helping you to grow up into thoughtful, confident young people who enjoy learning exceptionally well. Most of you behave extremely well for most of the time. You told me that it was a very friendly school. It was good to know that you would talk to an adult if you had a problem. You clearly enjoy learning a great deal. I agree with you that teachers are kind. You also told me that lessons were 'fun' but you learnt as well. Across the school, because of outstanding teaching you are making excellent progress and you achieve high standards in your reading, writing and mathematics.

Mrs Rees leads the school extremely well because she has created a very strong team of adults who enjoy working with you and want you to do well. Mrs Rees, governors and staff carefully put a plan together to help them organise how they want the school to improve. I have asked Mrs Rees to make sure everyone knows exactly what it is they are aiming at and when they have succeeded. One advantage of this is that when they have been successful they can all give themselves a pat on the back.

I know that the staff will continue to improve the school and that you will continue to help in that process.

Sincere good wishes for your future school careers.

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector