

Kersey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124705
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328196
Inspection date	10 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	52
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 Frances Moore
Headteacher	Mrs Belinda Harvey
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cherry Hill Kersey Ipswich Suffolk IP7 6EG
Telephone number	01473 823397
Fax number	01473 823397

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	10 March 2009
Inspection number	328196

© 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: whether all pupils and especially those in Key Stage 2 achieve equally well especially in mathematics, whether teaching and learning meets the needs of all pupils and whether the monitoring of the work of the school is rigorous enough to identify areas for further improvement. Evidence was gathered from visits to classrooms, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, scrutiny of pupils' work, analysis of parents' questionnaires and examination of school documentation, including assessment data and the school's-self evaluation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that most of the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Kersey is a much smaller than average size school in a rural location near Ipswich. This is a socially and economically advantaged area and there are no pupils currently entitled to free school meals. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. There is a below average proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is heavily over subscribed. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at the usual time, is above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed age class, alongside those in Key Stage 1. The school holds Silver Eco and Activemark awards. The headteacher has been in this role for one year and had worked in the school previously.

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 a school that continues to provide an outstanding quality of education. This is because the headteacher and whole school community work together in a united and determined way to provide the best that they can for the families of the area. Overall inspection judgements match those of the school's own self-evaluation. Everyone recognises what works well and what might need further development, which ensures there is excellent capacity to continue to improve. Parents are delighted with what the school has to offer their children, as summarised by one family who wrote, 'Kersey has been a fantastic school' and their child 'has been given confidence and encouragement, academically, socially and on a personal level. We have been nothing but happy with the wonderful school.'

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are above the expectations for their age. They make excellent progress and achieve very well throughout their time in school. Standards at the age of seven are exceptionally high in all areas and particularly strong in writing. Standards in Year 6 are also high and set to improve even further this year with a talented group of older pupils. Kersey is in an unusual position with a mix of schools in the locality to which pupils transfer at different ages. There are lots of applications to fill any vacancies when they occur. The school prides itself on being fully inclusive and welcomes all pupils, some of whom have recognised learning difficulties. These pupils often make exceptional progress in all areas of their development, as noted in several comments including, 'The school has surpassed our expectations as they have nursed her back to the child we used to have; enjoying learning, interacting with her peers and laughing once again'. Overall at the age of 11 standards are well above national averages. However, while standards in mathematics are high they are not quite as high as in reading, writing and other subjects. This is largely because pupils do not have a wide enough range of open-ended, problem solving activities where they have to apply what they know to follow an investigation.

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school works very closely with the adjoining church, which provides lots of opportunities for pupils to develop a spiritual dimension to their understanding of the world. Staff work hard to extend pupils' experiences of cultures other than their own, including through art and design, literature and music and are keen to do even more. A huge strength is the way in which the school encourages each child to blossom and grow in confidence. There are impressive and imaginative opportunities for them to take on responsibilities. This is epitomised by the encouragement given to pupils to develop small businesses, such as selling quails eggs. 'The Joosii Boys' produce and sell their own juices to fund the purchase, through missionary links, of three water filters for African families. These and numerous other opportunities help them become mature and responsible young people and helps to prepare them exceptionally well for their future.

Most pupils thoroughly enjoy school and enthusiastically take part in the range of activities. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They recognise the benefits of a well balanced diet and really enjoy active playtimes. They have a high degree of understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, including during physical activities. The behaviour of the majority is outstanding, although on occasion the high level of confidence that some pupils have, leads them to think that they do not need to listen or conform. Staff manage such idiosyncratic behaviours very well. Attendance is well above average.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. This is because the consistently good and occasionally excellent teaching supports pupils' learning very effectively and builds on what they already know. This ensures there are firm foundations for further learning. The staff have been exceptional in listening to parents' ideas of how the school could be further improved, in order to address the loss of some very able pupils to private education. The school now has three separate classes which ensures small teaching groups in Key Stage 2 and a high level of staff input. Teaching assistants are skilled and experienced and add considerably to the quality of support for those with additional needs. All staff explain things well to pupils and make good use of interactive white boards to provide information.

The curriculum is outstanding overall and the school is committed to providing first hand experiences for pupils. The greatest strength is the imaginative way that the school uses the local and wider community as a learning resource. The village and surrounding areas and people are used very well. For instance, using the village ford as a source of some interesting science activities. The staff are involved in a local pyramid of schools which provides activities to motivate pupils identified as gifted and talented. These have included a forensic investigation of a crime scene and a 'wasteful day' to promote understanding of recycling. Across the school, literacy lessons are well planned with strong cross-curricular links, which provide some interesting reasons to write. The curriculum for mathematics is generally good, although staff are somewhat reliant on commercial materials and do not plan enough open-ended activities, where pupils find things out by applying their knowledge of mathematics to solve problems.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are excellent. The school has an outstanding approach to listening to the pupils, parents and community. This is epitomised by the weekly 'open class' and headteacher's 'open office' time, where queries are taken seriously. Staff can also be contacted by email, which ensures a rapid response. There are excellent links with a wide range of organisations, including a Pupil Referral Unit, the high school and other local schools and pre-schools. Checks of those who help in school are up to date, as is training to safeguard the pupils. The school has recently changed some of the systems to record and track the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils. The information available is used very well to ensure a high but appropriate level of challenge is provided for all abilities. The marking of pupils' work is very effective in identifying what they have done well and what improvements could be made.

Leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headteacher brings great enthusiasm and commitment to the role, the school and the community. She is very well supported by the staff, who seek to continuously move the school forward and not rest on their laurels. School leaders are committed to ensuring the links with the local, wider and global community, including Malawi, are developed even further. There are well-established procedures to monitor the quality of what is provided. Staff evaluate their areas of responsibility and work well with external advisers. Governance is good. There is a standard number of formal meetings and some governors make visits to the school to find out more about what happens in lessons. Many of the governors visit the school informally on a regular basis and are very supportive and challenging. Overall, Kersey is a lively and enthusiastic learning community, which lives its vision of 'achieving potential together'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Children work in the mixed-age class alongside those in Years 1 and 2. This ensures there are lots of role models,

which the younger children are keen to live up to. They settle happily and really enjoy the activities available, particularly when working outdoors. Children enter the Reception group with above average skills in most areas and make outstanding progress, particularly in their personal and social development. When they enter Year 1, most are working at a level beyond the expectations for their age and those of all abilities achieve very well. The school is particularly successful in ensuring that the needs of the youngest children are fully met by, at times, providing a totally separate curriculum, designed to meet their specific needs. For instance, they work with an assigned member of staff outdoors and separate from the older pupils. Here, the range of activities is excellent, including working in 'The Kersey Garden Centre', where they have to produce a shopping list and then buy a range of low priced items and give change to the other customers. They enjoy using sand and water trays. They develop good skills by sharing the range of resources and playing safely on tricycles. The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is excellent. The provision is led and managed outstandingly by the headteacher, who is also a class teacher. Support staff are very effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations and solve problems, particularly in mathematics.

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	1
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?	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Kersey VC Primary School, Ipswich IP7 6EG

Thank you very much for looking after Dr Ramsey and me when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed speaking to several of you and meeting you in lessons, at lunchtime, in assembly and when we spoke to the school council.

These are some of the best things we found.

- All the staff and everyone in the school community are determined that Kersey will continue to keep moving forwards.
- Mrs Harvey has made an excellent start to leading the school. She clearly understands what else needs to be improved and is encouraging you all to achieve even more.
- There are some exciting things for you to do in the extra activities that make learning more interesting.
- You develop into very mature children and are really good at taking on responsibilities in and around school.
- Those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a great start to your school life because things are interesting and imaginative.

Yours is an excellent school. To help things to improve further we have asked that:

- staff provide more exciting opportunities for you to solve problems in mathematics.

To help your school to do even better please continue to be enthusiastic and remember to listen carefully to the staff and take notice of what they say.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector