

# Old Newton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124739
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	328204
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Best

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	59
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Wendy Lummins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sally Daggianti (acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	School Road Old Newton Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4PJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01449 673257

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<b>Age group</b>	4–9
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 December 2008
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**Fax number**

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- pupils' achievement in writing, particularly for the more able
- pupils' progress as they move through the school
- pupils' awareness of their targets and what they need to do to improve their work
- the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation.

Evidence was gathered from:

- discussions with pupils, teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority
- observation of lessons
- scrutiny of school documentation, teachers' planning and assessment record, and pupils' work.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It serves the socially mixed village of Old Newton and the surrounding area. Most pupils are White British. The proportion eligible for free school meals has recently risen and is similar to the national average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has also increased and is now above the national average.

When they start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children's skills and experiences are broadly similar to those expected for their age. Working in conjunction with the local playgroup, children attend school on a part-time basis from the September following their fourth birthday, becoming full-time in the term of their fifth birthday. This provision, which is not managed by the governing body, was inspected at the same time as the school and is reported separately.

There have been significant changes in the staffing and membership of the governing body since the last inspection and major extensions to the building completed. The acting headteacher took over at the start of this term pending the appointment of a permanent headteacher from Easter 2009.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory, which is one grade lower than the school's evaluation. One of the contributory reasons is that, in evaluating its work during the period since the last inspection, the school has not always identified its most important priorities and acted quickly enough to ensure that pupils are consistently achieving their best.

Numbers in each year group are small and the proportion of those who learn at different rates varies from year to year. Overall, there are no significant differences in the standards reached by boys and girls. Standards at the end of Year 2 in reading are above the national average and broadly in line with the national averages in mathematics and writing. In the 2008 assessments, the proportions of pupils gaining the higher level (Level 3) exceeded the national averages in reading and mathematics, but no pupil gained the higher level in writing, which is below the national average. The school met its targets in reading and mathematics, but missed them in writing. Over the last three years, standards have been maintained at a similar level in reading, but have fallen in mathematics and writing. At the end of Year 4, standards are above those expected for pupils of this age in reading and writing, and broadly in line in mathematics. In the 2008 non-statutory tests, pupils maintained their previous good progress in reading and writing, meeting and in some cases exceeding their targets at both the expected and higher levels, but they made less than expected progress in mathematics and missed their targets. This reflects the pattern in each of the previous two years.

Achievement is satisfactory. Children in the EYFS make good progress and, when they enter Year 1, most children's skills and experiences are above average. In Years 1 to 4, pupils' overall progress is satisfactory. The work set for them is not always appropriately challenging, particularly for those who are at risk of falling behind or for the more able. The school has recently reviewed and revised its arrangements for identifying and supporting these groups of pupils. As a result, programmes to support pupils are being introduced at an earlier stage and activities for the more able, such as producing a school newspaper, developed. Much of this work is recently in place and is not embedded, but recent assessments indicate that most Year 4 pupils are on track to meet the suitably challenging targets set for them.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and pupils are well managed. There are manageable systems for tracking pupils' progress and standards, but across the school, teachers' analysis and use of this information to adapt and modify their plans to cater for pupils' differing needs lack consistency. This is evident in lessons when pupils become distracted because they are not being stretched. The quality of the school's care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pastoral care and support are good, with robust arrangements for child protection and safeguarding, and high quality risk assessments. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils' work is marked regularly and, in the best practice, teachers' comments give clear advice as to what pupils need to do to improve their work. However, in some instances, marking consists only of brief comments that give no indication as to the next steps in learning. Staff have recently set pupils individual targets for improvement, but pupils are not yet sure how these will help them to improve.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs satisfactorily. The school follows the national guidelines for teaching literacy and has successfully improved pupils' use of information and communication technology. Staff are working to develop links between subjects through a themed-based

approach. There is sound provision for extra-curricular sporting activities and a good range of visit and visitors support pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is above average and pupils say how much they enjoy the relaxed and supportive atmosphere in small classes where they know each other well. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and they have a well-informed understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils have a good knowledge of the importance of healthy lifestyles and are particularly pleased with the recently installed indoor equipment for physical education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Although pupils take some responsibility for tasks around the school and take part in fund-raising for charity, their overall contribution to the community is satisfactory because wider links are not well enough established. Their economic well-being is also satisfactory as pupils have limited opportunities to apply their skills through enterprise and other initiatives.

The impact of leadership and management is satisfactory. Changes in staffing and the membership of the governing body mean that many individuals are still finding their feet and have not been involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work or drawing up priorities for improvement. The school's self-evaluation report is not rigorous enough in identifying the cause and impact of shortcomings. As a result, the school development plan does not focus sufficiently on improving standards and the quality of teaching where it is most needed. With the support of the local authority, the acting headteacher has monitored teaching, learning and records of pupils' progress. She has correctly identified the key priorities facing the school and is leading the implementation of the action plan drawn up to address these. The governing body is supportive of the school and, through training provided by the local authority, is developing its role in holding the school to account. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of global issues is developing through, for example, their study of rainforests. The school already has well-established links with other schools and providers in the area which benefit pupils, staff and governors and is now developing wider links through, for example, forging a closer working relationship with the local playgroup. Sound financial procedures are in place and the school provides satisfactory value for money. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and it has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

When they start in the EYFS, children's skills and experiences are broadly similar to those expected for their age. Some aspects, such as personal and social skills, speaking and listening and number skills are stronger than others, for example, linking sounds to letters and children's knowledge of shape and measures. Children settle quickly into the daily routines of Class 1 and appreciate the help their older classmates willingly give them. As the result of good teaching, children make good progress and, by the end of the EYFS, most meet or exceed the expected standards. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and trusting yet a business-like approach ensures that everyone is purposefully busy. Activities are well designed to both capture children's interests and ensure the development of their learning. There is good provision for children who learn at different rates and adult support is well directed to where it is most needed. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those children choose for themselves, and a particular strength is the way adults observe, guide and encourage children to explore and independently conquer the next steps in their learning. This is effectively

supported by high quality planning. This includes specific prompts for support staff and helpers to focus children's learning and clear goals for them to achieve.

The EYFS provision is well managed. The new classroom and outdoor area are very well equipped, with attractive areas to promote and sustain children's learning across all the different areas. Comprehensive yet manageable systems for recording children's progress provide teachers with easily accessible information to guide children's next steps.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the achievement of pupils, particularly the more able, in writing by the end of Year 2 and mathematics by the end of Year 4.
- Ensure that pupils are consistently aware of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Increase the rigour of school self-evaluation in order to more accurately inform priorities for improvement.

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.

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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?	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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

10 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Newton Church of England (VC) Primary School, Old Newton, Stowmarket, IP14 4PJ

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school earlier this week and, in particular, for all your help in telling us about your work. You are absolutely right to be so pleased with the new classroom and the new equipment and we are delighted to see how well you are looking after them. You get on well with adults and each other and your behaviour is good. Your understanding about the importance of keeping safe and healthy is impressive and we congratulate you on your good attendance.

You make a good start to your school life in Class 1, where you do lots of interesting things like finding out about different patterns using torches in the dark and using the large equipment outside. By the time you are ready to move on to middle school, your reading and writing are good. At the moment, you make better progress in some lessons than in others. This is because your teachers do not always give you work which is challenging enough or provide you with enough information to help you improve your work. This is why those of you now in Year 3 did not do as well in writing last year and why, in the last few years, pupils in Year 4 have not made as much progress as they should have done in mathematics.

We have suggested that Mrs Daggianti and the teachers do three things in particular to help you do even better. First, we have asked them to make sure that all of you, and particularly those who are good at writing and mathematics, do your best. Second, we want you all to know exactly what you need to do to improve your work. Your teachers have recently given each of you targets and we want them to develop this, together with the comments they make about your work. The third thing is for everyone to help Mrs Daggianti to find out what are the most important things to do to improve the school so that you can all do as well as you can. All of you have an important part to play in helping the governors and staff to do these things. Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours sincerely

Mike Best

Lead inspector