

Costessey Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120800
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339780
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Karen Heath

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Cork
Headteacher	Rosemary Kett
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation; including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school development plan, school policies and minutes of the governing body meetings. Inspectors spent the majority of the time observing 21 lessons and speaking to pupils. All the teachers in the school were observed. The inspection team also looked at 60 parent questionnaires, as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff. Inspectors looked at documentation with reference to the safeguarding of pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effective the school is in tackling pupil absence
- how pupils of a higher ability are challenged so they achieve as well as they should
- the way in which pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Information about the school

Costessey Infant School is smaller than average. Pupils join three reception classes and this comprises the school's Early Years Foundation Stage. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly the same as other schools. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is also similar to the national average.

The school holds the Healthy Schools standard, the Active Mark and has attained a Gold travel plan award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Costessey Infant School provides a good education and is a welcoming and friendly school which provides a vibrant learning environment where pupils' work is attractively displayed.

The school's curriculum provides a broad range of experiences which ensures that pupils develop their social and physical skills as well as learn the basics of literacy and numeracy. The quality of teaching is good; activities are tailored to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities and this helps them to make good progress. However pupils of a higher ability are not always encouraged to be independent learners, by checking and assessing their own work and reading their teacher's comments so that they can see for themselves what they need to do to improve.

Assessment results at the end of Year 2 last year in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average and the school has maintained average attainment and this represents good progress. Pupils join the school in the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. Pupils of a higher ability and those with special educational needs and or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.

The headteacher enjoys the respect of the school community. Her vision provides a clear direction for the school, where everyone is valued and the pupils are the priority. A real strength is the way in which the leadership team evaluates its work including seeking the views of parents and pupils. This enables all leaders, including the governors, to have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths. Teachers with responsibilities for key areas have the skills to give good support to the headteacher which means the school has a good capacity to further improve. The school has yet to undertake an audit, devise an action plan and evaluate its provision for community cohesion.

Pupils feel very safe and are happy to speak to the adults who work in school to help them. At Costessey the individual needs of pupils are well understood and the care, guidance and support given are outstanding. Parents' response to the questionnaire shows that they were unanimous in feeling that their pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils take on various responsibilities and for their age have an outstanding knowledge of leading a healthy lifestyle. They participate eagerly in aerobics, cooking activities and growing their own vegetables.

Although the youngest pupils enter the reception classes with skills that are not as well developed as would be expected for their age, particularly in language, teachers provide

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a good range of activities for all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, not all independent activities are planned in sufficient detail and the outside area is not always fully utilised to provide creative opportunities for pupils.

The school has taken successful action to address the historically high absence rates and attendance is now broadly average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on current good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - extending opportunities for pupils to be independent utilising the outside area to extend the pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum
 - supporting and extending the child initiated activities so that they give pupils high quality developmental learning experiences.
- Accelerate the progress of pupils of higher ability by :
 - ensuring teachers' marking tells pupils how they can improve their work
 - reviewing pupils' individual learning targets so they provide sufficient challenge
 - giving pupils opportunities to check their own work.
- Promote community cohesion more effectively by:
 - completing an audit to analyse the school's religious, ethnic and socio economic context
 - devising an action plan so that the school has a positive influence beyond its immediate community
 - evaluating the impact of the school's work on its community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils of all abilities achieve well and enjoy school. They talk about some of the interesting things they have enjoyed doing such as trips to the museum and learning about the 'Great Fire of London.' They work well individually and cooperate well in groups.

The school's own tracking system shows that pupils are achieving well in mathematics, reading and writing. The quality of teaching observed in lessons and scrutiny of work books show that all pupils make good progress including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Behaviour in lessons and on the playground is good. Pupils report that there is little bullying. They understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and particularly enjoy the 'mini gym'. A significant number of pupils participate in a variety of extra-curricular clubs. Everyone does a daily aerobics session and pupils take responsibility as leaders to promote this healthy exercise.

Costessey is a cohesive school community and pupils are supportive of each other, for example, as playground buddies. The school and class councils provide opportunities for

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pupils to influence the life of the school; such as improving lunchtimes by listening to music. Members of the local community frequently come into school to help, for instance, with the school garden. Pupils are active in charity fundraising and this is having a positive effect on pupils' contribution to the local and wider community.

The school has worked hard to encourage better attendance and this is now in line with the national average. The supportive work with some vulnerable families has resulted in less absence for these pupils.

As a result of the outstanding moral and social guidance they receive pupils show a good understanding of right and wrong and how to treat others. Their awareness of other people's countries and cultures has been broadened by the many visitors to the school. Parents from different communities come into school to talk about their customs and share recipes which the pupils then cook. This gives the pupils an understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is effective and includes a wide range of experiences which contribute

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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well to pupils' learning. Teachers ensure that the curriculum is modified well to cater for different abilities and tasks are generally well matched to extend learning. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson more able pupils were expected to do some challenging mental arithmetic. This helped them improve their skills in responding quickly with answers and being able to discuss their methods of calculation.

A range of adults support learning in the classroom and this ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Those with special educational needs and or disabilities are exceptionally well supported which means they are able to fully participate in lessons within their physical capacity.

The teaching is good and pupils respond with enthusiasm to their lessons. For example, a Year 2 class thoroughly enjoyed a country dancing session which extended their range of skills. They cooperated well with each other, demonstrating good physical co-ordination and awareness of space as well as being able to memorise some complicated movements! In a Year 1 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson pupils made good progress learning to make a film about space and were thrilled when they reviewed their background scene and saw the stars twinkling.

There are good systems in place for assessment and tracking pupils' progress and this helps teachers to plan effective lessons. However, teachers' marking is not always consistent in giving pupils a clear idea of how they could improve their work. More able pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to reflect on, or correct their own work.

The school provides outstanding guidance and support and it is particularly effective at targeting support for individuals. Those pupils who are included in the research project for mathematics "Numbers Count" particularly benefit from the one to one support. This has helped pupils gain confidence in their own ability and improve their attainment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders work well together and fully understand what the school needs to do to improve. Priorities have been identified accurately and actions to address shortcomings are rigorously monitored and evaluated. Subject leaders are confident and show a commitment in striving for better outcomes for pupils. The school ensures that everyone is treated fairly and given an equal chance of success. School leaders monitor the progress of all pupils and any underperformance is quickly identified and addressed.

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Safeguarding procedures are robust and all statutory requirements were in place at the time of the inspection. Staff are suitably trained in child protection. Risk assessments for activities are also thoroughly completed.

Governors are involved with the school on a day to day level as well as defining the school's strategic direction. Members of the Governing Body have a range of expertise. They ensure that they fully meet their responsibilities, for example, when consulting pupils on whether they feel safe in school.

The school has established some good working partnerships. Its links with two universities and a local college supports the education of adult learners who want to pursue a career in education by taking part in training and support work in the school. The work with the high school has helped to develop the sport provision for Costessey pupils and improved the teaching of science.

The school has a good understanding about its own religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. It acknowledges that its responsibility to promote community cohesion through a more robust audit, action plan and review of the impact of its work on different ethnic groups is still at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter school with knowledge and skills that are lower than those typical of their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Progress is good because a thorough assessment of children ensures that teachers and support staff plan activities to meet the children' needs. The majority of children enter Year 1 working securely

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within the levels expected of five-year-olds.

Induction arrangements are good so that children settle into school quickly. The school works effectively with parents and carers so they can support their children' learning at home.

There is a high commitment to children' welfare so that children' personal and social development is good. The good links with external agencies ensure that children are cared for well.

The classroom areas are bright and stimulating places to learn. Inspectors observed children being excited by the colours and shapes they could see when brine had evaporated into salt crystals. Other children were extending their language skills by retelling a story with small play figures on a story mat of the Arctic. Other 'Arctic explorers' were sitting in the tent with backpacks, using a torch and binoculars, using their imagination to look for penguins and polar bears.

Access to the large outside area is restricted and this has to be timetabled so that children are supervised sufficiently. While teachers use the inside classrooms well they do not make enough use of the outside space to extend the children' learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Activities are linked effectively to the current topic some are adult led as well as tasks that children choose for themselves so that they develop independence in their own learning. Although adults structure children' play to give them experience of different experiences and resources, some sessions do not extend the children' thinking or learning sufficiently.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good understanding about how young children learn and has nurtured good team working relationships. There are good systems for observing and recording individual children' progress, however, there is some inconsistency in the way children' learning is assessed and planned between the three Reception classes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents speak highly of the school and the support it provides to them and their pupils. The school works hard to involve parents in their pupils' learning. During the inspection two literacy workshops were very well supported by parents whose written evaluations

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were overwhelmingly positive.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Costessey Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	57	25	42	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	53	27	45	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	40	29	48	6	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	37	37	62	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	47	31	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	57	23	38	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	45	30	50	3	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	38	31	52	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	43	30	50	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	23	37	62	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	38	28	47	3	5	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	34	57	20	33	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	58	21	35	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Costessey Infant School, Norwich, NR5 0HG

Thank you very much for making the inspectors so welcome, we did enjoy seeing how hard you work in your lessons.

We think that yours is a good school. Mrs Kett and all her staff care about you and help you to do well. We are pleased that you feel safe and are happy to talk to the adults in school who help you if you are worried.

We were very impressed with your good behaviour and enjoyed watching all the healthy exercise you do like aerobics and country dancing. The display of your work makes the school bright and interesting. We think the birds must find the scarecrows you made for the school garden really frightening!

We would like your school to be even better and have asked the teachers and governors to:

- let the pupils in the Reception classes use the outside area better to do more exciting things and to support pupil's learning more in the activities they select themselves
- help those of you who learn quickly to check your own work so you know how to improve it by reading and acting on helpful comments made by your teachers when they mark your work
- help members of the community so they understand about other local people's similarities and differences.

You can help your school improve by making sure you work hard and come to school every day.

Good luck in your work.

Yours sincerely

Karen Heath

Lead inspector

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