

# Diss Church of England Junior School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	121032
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339838
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

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Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Tyler
Headteacher	Mr K Ridgway
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 May 2007
School address	The Entry Diss Norfolk IP22 4NT
Telephone number	01379 642675
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Age group	7-11
Inspection date(s)	24-25 September 2009
Inspection number	340290

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation including planning, evidence of monitoring, pupils' work and other reports.

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

- the consistency and proportion of good teaching and its impact on pupils' learning
- how well the school identifies, supports and monitors pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the capacity of leadership and management to secure sustained improvement in outcomes of pupils

## Information about the school

This average sized school has two forms of entry in each year group. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is below average and only a small number speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost a third of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is well above average. These include speech and language, and behavioural and emotional difficulties. Among others, the school has the Activemark and Artsmark awards. Out-of-school provision is managed by a private provider and this is subject to a separate inspection report.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

## Main findings

Diss Junior is a satisfactory school. Its pupils make sound progress from very varied starting points, so that standards are average. In 2009 national tests at the end of Year 6, results in mathematics and science rose and were above average, but pupils' performance in writing in particular was disappointing and they did not meet their targets. Initiatives to improve writing have borne fruit in other year groups, with a particular emphasis on engaging boys.

Behaviour is good and pupils work and play together well. They say they feel safe in school, and where incidents of bullying have occurred in the past believe they have been dealt with appropriately. They have a satisfactory understanding of healthy living, although feel that the tuck shop could offer more choices of fruit. Pupils make a good contribution to their own and the local community, with the school council involved in staff recruitment as well as in improving aspects of school life. Pupils take responsibility for leading play and acting as buddies to their peers. Their enjoyment of school is evident from their consistently good attendance. Pupils develop the expected skills for their age by the time they leave the school and are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. At times their learning is too directed and they do not have enough opportunities to develop their independence.

There are examples of good teaching in every year group, but this is inconsistent, and teaching is satisfactory overall. Leaders and governors are keen to see rapid improvement in the provision, and a priority for them is to ensure that teaching becomes consistently good. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils, and set clear objectives for lessons. However, tasks do not always match pupils' abilities closely enough and there can be a lack of challenge for more able pupils. Feedback to pupils is sometimes too positive and does not show them sufficiently how to improve. The curriculum is enriched well, with a good variety of clubs that many pupils enjoy and visits to places of interest, such as Kentwell Hall, where Year 4 pupils took part in a Tudor re-enactment day. The school is beginning to make links across subjects, but this work is at an early stage. The school manages its large numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities appropriately and works particularly successfully with its most vulnerable pupils. There is some variability, however, in the quality of the support that individuals and groups receive, so that, while all pupils make satisfactory progress, at times their progress slows.

The school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. A relatively new leadership team is still establishing itself, and there is scope for the roles and responsibilities of the deputy headteacher and middle leaders to be widened, so that

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they take a fuller part in driving forward initiatives and improving outcomes for pupils. Self-evaluation is generally accurate, but is not sufficiently systematic or rigorous to secure the rapid rates of improvement desired. The school's strategic plans have too many priorities, so that the really important ones become bogged down in unnecessary detail. Governors ask searching questions and have made some pertinent contributions to monitoring the school's work. However, their role is not sufficiently focused on evaluating progress towards meeting the school's key goals for improvement.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the consistency of good teaching and learning by:
  - using assessment to tailor activities precisely to the full range of pupils' needs
  - giving pupils accurate feedback on their progress
  - having high expectations of all pupils.
- Develop pupils' independence by:
  - encouraging more oral contributions to lessons
  - providing regular opportunities for them to review and reflect on their own learning
  - providing further opportunities for planning investigations and solving problems.
- Leaders and governors should accelerate the pace of improvement by:
  - systematically and rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work
  - enhancing the impact of middle managers on pupils' achievements.

A proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Standards in the current Year 3 are average. Pupils often join the school either having reached higher levels of attainment, or with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that the range of attainment is very wide. Pupils achieve satisfactorily given their starting points. When the opportunities arise they enjoy taking an active part in lessons, as when Year 5 pupils created tableaux of themselves as impoverished Victorian children. This activity enabled pupils from different groups, including those learning English as an additional language, to take a full part. Nonetheless, at times there is too much emphasis on paper and pencil exercises, which does not sufficiently promote their independence.

A pupil said, 'We're all one big group and we all get along together.' Pupils play

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together well, with the older ones helping the younger ones, and make good use of the school's good outdoor facilities. They have a good sense of how to stay safe, strengthened by the school council's anti-bullying drive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with well-developed values. Year 6 pupils found it interesting to research the life of Martin Luther King Junior and to produce presentations using new technology, which they were all able to do, including those with special educational needs. Much of their understanding of other cultures is through learning about different faiths rather than comparing wider traditions of art, music and dance. Pupils' links with a school in Uganda give them an insight into how other pupils live. While pupils know about the need to take exercise and eat five healthy portions of food a day, their understanding of other aspects of healthy living is more patchy. They enjoy strong links with the local parish church and the singing group entertains elderly people in the community on regular occasions throughout the year. Pupils have also made representations about improving facilities at a local park and are developing their sense of citizenship. An Industry Day gave pupils the opportunity to dress up as the people they would like to be when they start earning a living. They have also had their horizons widened by visiting the campus of a local university.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

## How effective is the provision?

Planning sets out clearly what pupils are to learn and how this will be tailored to suit their differing abilities. In good lessons the teaching successfully enables all pupils to progress well in their learning because effective account is taken of what they know

<sup>1</sup> 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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and can understand. This is not yet consistent across the school and, at times, expectations are not high enough, so that pupils do not produce their best work. While a variety of strategies are used to engage pupils in their learning, including class games and partner work, there is a tendency for teachers to do too much talking for too much of the time. This means that opportunities are sometimes lost for pupils to discuss their own ideas and to share their thinking in depth. Marking of pupils' work is very positive, but sometimes this enthusiasm is not deserved and it is not made sufficiently clear to pupils how they should improve their work. There is increasing use of information and communication technology in the curriculum, which is beginning to give pupils opportunities to undertake their own research. Much curriculum development is in its infancy and there is little evidence of widespread creativity, although there are pockets of good practice. Some of the work to interest boys in writing, involving designing story boards, has caught their imaginations and resulted in more rapid progress. Good use is made of residential visits to develop pupils' social skills and build their confidence, including a trip for Year 6 pupils at the start of the academic year, so that they can get to know one another better. A wide variety of interesting clubs includes mountain biking, cheerleading and gymnastics.

The school is successful at providing for its most vulnerable pupils and those with acute disabilities, as well as in promoting good attendance. The provision for the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Procedures are all in place and followed conscientiously, but the quality of support varies and monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to identify the success or otherwise of particular interventions in moving pupils on in their learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has promoted a positive ethos in the school effectively, building on its Christian traditions, and this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and the strong contribution they make to their own and the wider community. A parent commented, 'The school is a lovely, nurturing school where pupils' welfare is paramount.' The extent to which leadership and management embed ambition and drive improvement is satisfactory, with steady improvement in standards and pupils making the expected progress in their learning. The pace of improvement is not faster because monitoring is not systematic and lacks sufficient rigour to bring about rapid change. There are inconsistencies in the provision, even though there are elements of good practice present in every year group. The new leadership team is not yet fully

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galvanising staff, since the headteacher and other leaders are growing into their roles and responsibilities. They recognise the importance of their monitoring role in checking and following-up on the quality of provision, but this is not currently done systematically. Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school, but their monitoring does not target key areas for improvement. The school is making a positive contribution to its local community and extending links further afield, for example with an inner city school in Aberdeen. It is not yet able to articulate the impact of the measures it has taken to promote community cohesion, as leaders and governors are working on a mechanism to evaluate it accurately.

There are no differences between the performance of groups within the school, as their achievement is satisfactory, but there is some room for improvement in the provision for each group. The school promotes equality satisfactorily and ensures there is no discrimination. Safeguarding measures meet requirements. While self-evaluation is generally reliable, despite a tendency to be too generous at times, strategic planning does not focus enough on the school's key desired outcomes. Plans contain many actions, but are less clear about what these will achieve.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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## Views of parents and carers

Parents are generally positive about the school and value its caring atmosphere. Some parents said they would like to know more about how well their children are doing, and others felt they should be given more notice of upcoming events. The school has appropriate procedures in place to inform parents about their children's progress and weekly newsletters tell them what is planned.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Diss Church of England Junior 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 inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	53	22	45	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	45	27	55	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	16	33	27	55	3	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	45	19	39	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	37	27	55	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	19	39	22	45	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	29	30	61	1	2	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)	20	41	24	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	18	37	24	49	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	24	27	55	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	29	24	49	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	39	20	51	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	24	49	22	45	1	2	0	2

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 all 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

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>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.



30 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Diss Church of England Junior School, Norfolk, IP22 4NT

Thank you for making us welcome at your school, which provides you with a satisfactory education. Here are some of its strengths.

- Your behaviour is good and you have a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- You support one another well, for example as buddies and play leaders.
- You are involved in many positive ways in your local community.
- There are plenty of clubs and visits for you to enjoy.
- Your attendance is good.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that the work set is just right for you and not too easy or too hard. We believe that you could take a more active part in your learning and encourage you to let your teachers know how well you think you are doing and what interests you. We have asked the school's leaders and governors to check its work carefully so that they know exactly what needs to happen for the school to improve further. We believe the school could get better even faster than it is at the moment.

Thank you again for your help. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Nick Butt  
Lead Inspector

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