

Alpington and Bergh Apton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121147
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339878
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Polly Brompton
Headteacher	Teresa Osborne
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time observing teaching, seeing five teachers, nine lessons and making two further classroom visits. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils both formally and informally. Data showing pupils' progress were scrutinised, as were policies and procedures concerning pupils' safety and plans for future school development. Additionally, questionnaires returned by 42 parents, 16 pupils and 6 members of staff were analysed.

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

- the level of challenge for boys in Key Stage 1
- the impact of the school's recent focus on increasing pupils' use of computers across the curriculum and extending their understanding of cultural diversity
- the school's knowledge of pupils' standards and achievement in those subjects that are not formally tested.

Information about the school

This is a small village school with no pre-school provision on site. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. Most pupils come from the surrounding villages and although their backgrounds vary, all are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is higher. There are fewer pupils eligible for free school meals than is typical nationally. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for three weeks.

The school gained Healthy School status in 2009 and the Activemark in recognition of its physical education in 2006.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Parents describe this good school as, 'a very special place' and commend it for its 'warm, friendly and productive' ethos. Several features of its work are outstanding. Most noteworthy is the extremely effective support for those pupils who may be facing difficulties, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which contributes to the exceptional progress they make.

A lively, topic-based curriculum adds enjoyment for pupils. Good teaching that pays close attention to individual pupils' needs in lessons ensures good progress for all. Outstanding care and support help pupils to flourish. These strengths contribute to pupils' exceptionally mature behaviour and approach to learning. Nevertheless, marking in pupils' books varies in its usefulness and the use of targets that pupils understand is inconsistent. This means that on occasions pupils are not as clear as they could be about how to improve their work and what they are aiming for next.

On entry, most children join the Reception Year with the levels of skill, knowledge and understanding expected for their age. They make good progress and join Year 1 with emerging strengths in key literacy and numeracy skills. Progress in creative development, while satisfactory, is not better because opportunities for children to make choices and develop their own interests are limited. Standards when pupils leave Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science and rising. Evidence from work seen in lessons and displays supports teachers' informal assessment that standards in information and communications technology (ICT) and art are higher than expected for pupils' ages. Evidence from the school's success in competitive sports events suggests that there are strengths in pupils' cricket, tennis and tag-rugby skills. The school recognises that it does not have a clear and precise view of standards in those subjects that are not tested formally and so is missing an opportunity to identify precise next steps for pupils' learning in these subjects.

The school has developed well since the previous inspection. Staff have invested a great deal of energy in improving learning for all pupils through more rigorous assessment procedures in English and mathematics, while also enriching the curriculum. This has contributed to the improved achievement and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching strategies have been enhanced and pupils' learning enriched by a greater use of drama as a learning tool. Pupils in Key Stage 2 now select their topics, and resources for ICT have been substantially updated, so they are using computers regularly to research areas of significant interest to them. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and relative weaknesses. These are strengths that are contributing to the continuing rise in standards. The extent of effective teamwork between staff and the new headteacher, who already has a very

astute understanding of the school, is impressive given the very short time they have been working together. These features, and the actions taken to secure improvements, mean the school is well placed for continued development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the quality of learning further by ensuring that marking in books and the use of targets consistently give pupils a clear idea of what they are aiming for.
- Gain a more precise understanding of pupils' skills across the curriculum by establishing assessment procedures for those subjects that are not formally tested.
- Give children in the Reception Year more opportunities to develop their own ideas by reviewing the use of time, resources for learning and the deployment of staff.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The inspection took a particular interest in the level of challenge for boys in Key Stage 1 because national data for 2009 indicated that they did less well than other groups of pupils in school and less well than their peers nationally. Lesson observations showed that boys do just as well as girls in class and that boys and girls are already working at levels above expectations for their age because they are challenged equally well. For example in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson, most Year 2 pupils' skills in selecting a strategy and calculating mentally to solve number problems exceeded national expectations for their age.

In most lessons pupils' standards are above average and learning is accelerated because teachers' expectations are high and lessons are well planned to meet differing needs. This means that virtually all pupils make consistently good progress. For example, in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, pupils of different abilities in Years 5 and 6 rapidly solved increasingly complex problems concerning the multiples of odd and even numbers and for the most able, recognising and calculating square roots. Pupils in this class reached above expected standards in creative writing, taking account of chronology and writing empathetically because of co-operative learning in an extremely well organised lesson. Pupils in Year 4 used a greater level of computer skill than expected for their age to research marine amphibians and reached good levels of scientific understanding because of high expectations. Cooperative working across age groups meant that they contributed to pupils in Year 3 making equally good rates of progress.

Consistently impressive behaviour in lessons makes a significant and positive contribution to learning. Pupils regularly collaborate on tasks and are remarkably focused and mutually supportive on these occasions. Pupils of all abilities are ready to challenge themselves and each other. For example in one class a boy said to his peers, 'Don't say that, nonetheless is a better word'. In this positive learning environment pupils who find learning difficult are very willing to share ideas. They give no indication of fearing failure and the result is that they will stretch themselves, for example by offering to deconstruct a perimeter calculation.

All pupils and parents who completed inspection questionnaires felt that the school keeps them safe. Pupils have a mature understanding of safety issues. They recognise that some behaviour damages feelings and emotional well-being, as well as being alert to more practical dangers. They value their school highly and have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit. A very clear moral code permeates the school. Spiritual development as seen in valuing the non-material elements of life is excellent. Although an appreciation of British cultural diversity is less well developed, pupils are becoming tolerant and thoughtful citizens.

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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The inspection confirmed the school's view that teaching is good and outstanding on occasion, although the usefulness of marking in books varies widely. A key and consistent strength is that of high expectations of all pupils and modified tasks and questions throughout the lesson, including during the introduction and plenary. When teaching is good rather than outstanding, in spite of these considerable strengths, the pace slows a little periodically. Outstanding teaching is characterised by a very confident

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

approach, born of very secure subject knowledge and excellent planning to meet the various needs represented across the ages and ability levels in the class. These lessons proceed at a cracking pace with teachers communicating and generating enormous enthusiasm. These features are fully effective because of the high quality support in place for pupils with identified learning needs, whether through extra adult support, peer cooperation or extra resources.

Particular strengths in the curriculum lie in its interest to pupils, especially where they have selected topics themselves. Special programmes designed and implemented to help particular groups of pupils are highly effective. There are plenty of valuable enrichment activities and special events that broaden pupils' experience of art as well as giving them opportunities for competitive sports. Work to embed in the curriculum a greater awareness of diversity within Britain is underway, for example by ensuring that pupils in Year 6 appreciate that there are British Sikhs. However, this is still at a relatively early stage of development.

The school is extremely supportive of each individual pupil and commitment to equality of opportunity is outstanding. Targeted support enables all pupils, including the most vulnerable, to thrive, and often make remarkable progress. Most parents feel well-informed, that their views are valued and that their child's particular needs are recognised. In its determination to keep developing the quality of each pupil's experience, the school works extremely effectively with other schools, professionals and organisations, such as the Bergh Apton Community Arts Trust and the School Sports Partnership.

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?

This is a cohesive school. Senior staff and teachers share an outstanding and effective commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils, whatever their background or circumstances, as well as a drive for continuing school improvement. There is a shared sense of purpose for school development but subject leaders have yet to formalise their understanding of pupils' attainment in non-tested subjects. All the pupils who completed questionnaires feel that the headteacher and senior staff do a good job. The vast majority of parents, for whom there are several routes of communication, feel the same way. Several parents remarked on the positive start made by the new headteacher. Since the beginning of term she has skilfully addressed priorities and begun a

consultation process enabling her quickly to gain an accurate view of the school.

There are well established systems for checking each pupil's progress and governors make a good contribution to monitoring the work of the school. Consequently, staff and governors know the school well, and share an accurate view of its strengths and areas for further development. For example, there is a shared understanding of plans to develop community cohesion and evaluate its impact to date. The school recognises strengths in its work with the local community and in the more recent success in raising pupils' awareness of the global community; it is aware that links with a contrasting British community is the next step.

Safeguarding documentation is comprehensive and detailed and procedures are effective. Issues about safeguarding are woven into the curriculum and contribute to pupils' personal development very effectively.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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

The Early Years Foundation Stage team are focused on helping all children to make good progress. They do this most successfully and consistently in promoting children's key early literacy and numeracy skills, with particular success in reading. The school's established ethos of valuing and nurturing each child contributes to their well-being in the Reception Year. Children happily work alongside their older classmates. They show a willingness to keep themselves and others safe by extremely good behaviour. They are highly motivated and keen to participate in the activities available. During the inspection children showed considerable interest in and respect for a visiting tortoise. They

conscientiously washed their hands after touching the shell.

On occasion they receive too much adult help, and this constrains their learning and their choices. For example, during the inspection they enjoyed using paper and card to make 'pet cages', but their choice of materials was limited and sticky tape was cut at specific lengths for them. As a result, while children continued to think about pets and gain an understanding of the world around them, opportunities to apply physical and mathematical skills creatively were reduced. Children have good opportunities to share ideas about what they want to learn within topics that have been chosen by adults to match what pupils are doing in Year 1. However, from time to time Reception children have to interrupt their learning to move with their Year 1 classmates into the hall, for example for a gymnastics session. The school has made a good start to implementing the latest national guidance for this age group but recognises there is more to be done.

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

All the parents who completed inspection questionnaires were happy overall with their child's experience at the school. The greatest area of concern related to how well staff manage pupils' behaviour. During the inspection impeccable behaviour was seen, supported by very positive relationships between pupils and staff. This positive picture was confirmed in discussion with pupils. A few parents disagreed that the school took account of their views, and a very few disagreed that the school took account of their child's needs. The inspection found many routes of communication available to parents, good attention paid to individual academic needs and extremely effective account taken of pupils' emotional needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alington and Bergh Apton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	57	18	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	69	13	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	52	20	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	43	23	55	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	62	16	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	52	19	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	45	22	52	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)	21	50	18	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	48	19	45	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	36	21	50	5	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	45	20	48	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	55	17	40	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	60	17	40	0	0	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.



28 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alpington and Bergh Apton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Norwich, NR14 7NH

Thank you for all your help when we came to inspect your school recently. Special thanks go to those of you who met with me and shared your work and your ideas. We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school that has some very special features. One of the most important strengths we found is that you make good progress in your learning and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that exceed expectations for your age. This prepares you well for the future. Those of you who find learning quite difficult make fantastic progress. It was wonderful to see how ready you are to 'have a go' and answer questions in class. Do keep this up; it is helping you enormously. You all behave extremely well. We were particularly impressed at how well you work together in lessons. This contributes to you learning so well and such good behaviour also helps everyone to feel extremely safe in school. You know how much the staff care about you and you benefit from all the links they make with your parents and other organisations to keep making the school even better.

All the adults in your school want it to keep improving. We have suggested that the most important things to do next are to make sure your teachers know exactly how well you are doing in subjects like history and art, so they can help you move on. We have asked them to make sure that marking in books is more often helpful in identifying what you have done well and what you need to do next, and to make sure that you understand and remember your targets. We have also asked them to think about how they organise the time, the resources and adult help for the youngest children, so that they can make more choices for themselves.

We wish you every success in the future and hope you always enjoy learning so much.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector

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