

Woolpit Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124549
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340595
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Rachel Gooch
Headteacher	Mrs Anne O'Connell
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom visited the school for half a day specifically to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. The inspectors observed all four class teachers at least once when visiting seven lessons, and also observed the extra help given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inspectors held meetings with some of the teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, and pupils, and looked at a range of information, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of pupils' work. Questionnaires returned by 72 parents and carers, 45 pupils, and 13 members of staff were analysed.

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

the extent to which the school is able to substantiate its own evaluation that pupils make good progress, with specific focus on the learning and progress of girls

- the effectiveness of the curriculum in enabling the progressive development of pupils' skills within mixed-age classes
- the impact of the new leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage class on children's learning and progress.

Information about the school

This small rural school caters for children from Woolpit and the local villages of Drinkstone and Beyton. Almost all of its pupils are of White British heritage. Demographic change within the local area is affecting the school. The number on roll is falling, and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is rising. At the time of the inspection, this proportion was in line with the national average. Most of these pupils have general learning difficulties. In many cases, these are linked to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. In September 2009, the school had to reduce the number of classes from five to four. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught as a single year group, and there are three mixed-age classes for pupils in Years 1/2, 2/3 and 3/4.

The school has Healthy School status, an Activemark accreditation for its promotion of physical education and sport, and an 'Eco School' award. The school is awaiting assessment for the ICT Mark in recognition of its commitment to and use of information and communication technology (ICT).

The ARC (Woolpit Childcare Centre), which is located on the school site, is privately run and is, therefore, inspected separately.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils. All pupils are warmly welcomed and fully included. They make good progress because they are taught well. The well-planned curriculum, based around exciting themes, helps teachers to provide their pupils with lessons designed to capture their imagination while giving plenty of practice in developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. As a result, the pupils are keen to learn, attentive and play a full part in lessons.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. A number of parents and carers commented appreciatively on the 'fun and active learning experiences' provided for their children. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils also make good progress, particularly in reading and in their use of ICT. However, by the time they leave at the end of Year 4, their attainment in English and mathematics is only in line with national expectations. This is because of the large increase in average and low-attaining pupils who have joined the school over the past four years. In a small school such as this, the attainment of each individual has a disproportionate effect on the overall outcome.

While teaching is good, it is not consistently so, and there was no outstanding teaching observed. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, with tasks pitched at different levels in order to meet the needs of pupils of below average, average and above average attainment. This method of working helps ensure that a very large majority of pupils make good gains in their learning. There remain, however, a few who only make satisfactory progress. In many cases, these are pupils within the average attaining groups. This situation occurs because teachers do not always make enough use of the success criteria, which they share with the pupils, in order to provide an extra layer of challenge within the tasks set. Where lessons are only satisfactory, the pace of learning is too slow because teachers do not set clear enough targets for pupils to achieve within the time available.

An important factor in pupils' good progress is the careful monitoring of their academic development. This ensures that extra help is provided where it is most needed. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have individual learning programmes that are carefully tailored to their needs and effectively delivered. All pupils receive good academic guidance in lessons. This generally occurs during highly-productive dialogue between teachers and their pupils, usually while pupils are working either individually or in small groups. However, the guidance provided through teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. There are many examples of encouraging comments made by teachers in pupils' books, but teachers do not always give clear guidance about precisely what pupils should do next in order to improve. Where evaluative comments are made, they do not generally refer to the targets set for

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pupils and pupils do not always act on them.

A particularly noteworthy feature is the pupils' good personal development and well-being. The strong family feel that permeates all aspects of the school's work stems from the very effective promotion of pupils' social awareness through the excellent care, guidance and support provided. Pupils' good behaviour contributes strongly to the climate for learning in all classes.

In recent years there have been good improvements in the curriculum, the promotion of pupils' personal development, and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These improvements, which contribute strongly to the school's inclusive ethos, have been driven through by the headteacher, in close partnership with an outstanding governing body. The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is accurate and is based on a range of data including the evaluation of consultations with parents and carers and pupils. In response to the changing nature of its catchment, the school has put a lot of effort into promoting cohesion within its own community and is successfully integrating 'hard pressed' families. It fully recognises that it now needs to promote community cohesion further by broadening pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural nature of British society.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress, with outstanding teaching as a regular feature of provision, by ensuring that:
 - teachers make better use of success criteria to provide an extra layer of challenge within the tasks that they set for pupils
 - lessons are always conducted at a crisp pace and with clear targets to be achieved by pupils within the time available
 - when marking pupils' work, teachers consistently provide pupils with at least one point for improvement and always check on pupils' progress in meeting the targets set for them to achieve.
- Ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the richness and diversity of British society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

One of the key inspection foci was the performance of girls. This was because national data indicated underachievement by the girls in 2009. However, inspectors found little difference between their performance and that of the boys. Teachers' good knowledge of the pupils enables them to provide achievable challenges, regardless of age or prior attainment, and well chosen topics capture pupils' interest. Together, this combination results in the sort of good learning seen in an English lesson for pupils in the Year 3/4 class. This was based on work about healthy eating, and enabled pupils to use their own experiences to very good effect when devising their own menus. The lesson focus on the use of adjectives produced descriptions such as: 'gloriously grilled, crispy chicken

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breast' which, pupils admitted, and the inspector agreed, were effective in making them feel hungry.

In all year groups, pupils display good levels of confidence and competence in using ICT. For example, the school website contains regular podcasts by pupils, and an online forum enables them to contribute information about famous people.

Well targeted support to develop specific skills is effective throughout the school. For example, the 'Ginger Bear' group for children in Reception provides regular opportunities for a small number of children to practise and improve their skills in speaking and listening. The school is also good at meeting the needs of a growing number of pupils with social and emotional difficulties. A 'nurture group' for pupils in Years 3 and 4 helps them overcome learning difficulties and improve their behaviour and attitudes. These pupils are making good progress in literacy and numeracy.

Since about a third of the pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire had some concerns about behaviour, as did a number of parents and carers, the inspection looked very closely at pupils' conduct. Discussions with pupils revealed that their concerns generally relate to a very small minority, all with clearly identified behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The behaviour of these, and all pupils, is monitored very carefully and all incidents are thoroughly dealt with. Although, as one pupil noted, 'This sometimes takes some time.' Another maturely viewed these pupils' difficulties as 'part of growing up'.

Pupils clearly know what they need to do to keep fit and healthy, and support for a wide range of extra-curricular physical activities is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, and demonstrate this in lessons by using equipment responsibly. There is also an extremely strong emphasis on Internet safety. Almost all of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires feel that the school keeps their children safe. Although pupils' social and moral development is good, their appreciation of their own development is only satisfactory and their awareness of other cultural traditions, particularly within Britain, is weak.

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

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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The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

There are many good features of teaching. These include teachers' good relationships with pupils, well established routines, and effective management and organisation of lessons. Sometimes, teachers do not make best use of the time available, and miss opportunities to inject pace into lessons by highlighting examples of good work or by refocusing pupils on precisely what they are expected to achieve.

Although the curriculum has many good features, it is judged on its impact on pupils' attainment and progress. For this reason, it is good rather than outstanding. A topic-based approach to planning, together with teachers' effective use of techniques such as role play, help capture pupils' imaginations and heighten interest in learning. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson, which was part of a topic about an African village, the pupils took on roles as members of the Sangalala tribe. The class teacher, wearing a hard-hat in her role as a construction engineer, initiated a lively conversation during which the class contributed thoughtful suggestions about the essential criteria for the construction of a river crossing. The outcomes of this discussion then led to a design task. Weekly 'Dragon Time' in which pupils work together in groups comprising Reception and Year 1 and Years 2 to 4, contribute greatly to their skills in working collaboratively. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Their individual learning programmes set out clear targets for them to achieve and their progress in meeting these targets is regularly reviewed.

The quality of day-to-day pastoral care for pupils is exceptional. All pupils are viewed as members of the school 'family'. New entrants are very quickly assessed and their individual needs identified. On entry to the Reception Year, induction procedures are exceptionally thorough, and there are very close links with the on-site children's centre. Transition arrangements at the end of Year 4 help ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education. Special events, such as a mini-museum created to house pupils' work about the Romans, help celebrate success and contribute greatly to the development of pupils' self-esteem.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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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?

Woolpit is an inclusive school in which discrimination has no place and which gives pupils a sense of belonging. The direction provided in embedding ambition and driving improvement stems largely from the headteacher, and is shared by all staff and governors. All staff have developed good skills as leaders. The impact of good leadership, for example in special educational needs and ICT, is seen in the good progress made by pupils. The governing body is exceptionally well informed and has an excellent understanding of the range of performance indicators used to gauge the school's effectiveness. Not only does it provide outstanding challenge, based on very close monitoring of the school's work, but it also provides excellent day-to-day support for the school. The chair and vice-chair, for example, help with 'Dragon Time'. Their support, and that of parents and carers and a representative of the local sports partnership, helps ensure that pupils receive a lot of individual attention. All aspects relating to the safeguarding of pupils are outstanding. For example, documentation is impeccably kept and the governing body ensures that monitoring arrangements are extremely thorough and rigorously applied. Governors and staff share a very clear understanding of the needs of the local community and work effectively to support and integrate all families. Events organised by the Friends of Woolpit School are very popular and often help new parents and carers to settle in. Through the teaching of topics, the school is working to promote pupils' awareness of the global perspective of community. However, efforts to promote understanding of the diverse cultures within Britain have proved to be less successful.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Provision has improved because of the effective actions of leadership and good support from the local authority. From broadly average starting points, most children make good progress. When they transfer to Year 1, most are working within the goals expected at this age. Children show a keen interest in all aspects of their learning. This is because the staff team has a good understanding of the needs of young children and provides them with a wide range of exciting opportunities for learning. For example, activities on an 'Overground/Underground' theme captured children's imagination and challenged their thinking as they went digging and were asked to work out what sort of conditions a worm would need in order to survive. There is a good balance between learning directed by adults and opportunities for children to choose their own activities. Assessment procedures are good, although staff are finding it difficult to ensure that a clear majority of observations are of children's independent, unaided learning.

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

There was a high rate of response to the inspection questionnaire. Most parents and carers expressed positive views in response to all questions except one. This related to the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection findings do not support these views, nor are they supported by the pupils interviewed who said that adults deal well with any instances that occur. These instances are not widespread, but are due to a very small minority of pupils with identified behavioural difficulties. To its credit, the school is working hard to integrate these pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woolpit Community 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 115 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	49	31	43	6	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	44	38	53	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	32	44	61	3	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	39	36	50	7	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	20	28	49	68	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	32	44	61	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	36	39	54	6	8	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)	19	26	46	64	5	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	26	43	60	8	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	22	33	46	16	22	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	22	45	63	8	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	29	40	56	9	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	39	39	54	4	6	1	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woolpit Community Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9RU

I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when the inspectors came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work. Your parents and carers think that you go to a good school, and we agree.

Here is a list of some of the things we liked best.

You learn well in lessons and make good progress because you are taught well.

Your teachers plan really interesting topics for you. We liked all of these and, particularly, your work about the Romans.

We were impressed by your ICT work on the school website.

You are making good progress in becoming good citizens. We think that most of you are very well behaved and like the way you get on well with each other.

We particularly liked all of the activities, especially the sporting ones, that you can take part in before and after school.

All of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after.

The people who run your school are doing a good job.

Every school has something that could be improved, and this is what we have asked your school to concentrate on to help you to do even better.

To help you to make even more progress we would like all of your lessons to be good and some of them to be excellent. With that in mind, we have asked your teachers to add some extra challenges into your work in lessons. We would also like them to make sure that you always work quickly, and to give you clear targets to reach in your lessons. When your teachers mark your work, we would like them to tell you what you need to do next to improve and then check up that you have done what they have asked you to do. I am sure that you will do your best to help with this by always being careful to follow your teachers' advice.

We would like teachers to help you to learn more about the people who live in other parts of this country because we think that it is important that you know about their different cultures.

I wish you great success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector

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