

St Edmundsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124762
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340649
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Mitchell
Headteacher	Anne Evans
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty lessons were observed and ten teachers were seen teaching. Inspectors held meetings with senior staff, groups of pupils, governors and officers of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of policies, reports and information on pupils' attainment and progress. Eighty-two questionnaires completed by parents were scrutinised.

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

- whether pupils were making sufficient progress in mathematics by the time they reached the end of Year 4
- the extent to which teaching is effective in promoting learning and progress, especially in mathematics
- whether new arrangements for leadership and management are driving improvement, particularly in mathematics.

Information about the school

This is a primary school of average size. The number on roll has fallen in recent years requiring a reduction in the number of classes and the combining year groups. Half of the pupils live outside the area the school is intended to serve. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language, and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school was re-affirmed as an Investor in People and achieved status as a Healthy School in 2009. It also holds the Active Mark.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

By the end of Year 4, achievement is inadequate because pupils are not learning effectively in mathematics and make insufficient progress. This results from too much variation in the quality of mathematics teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 4. In addition, assessment of pupils' progress in the subject is not rigorous enough and, therefore, information on their performance is not a reliable indicator of pupils' outcomes in mathematics by the end of Year 4 and not a force for raising attainment. The standard of pupils' current work in mathematics, by the end of Year 4, is below average.

Although leaders have already identified the need to improve attainment and assessment in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 as a priority, they have been unable to demonstrate that effective actions have been taken to achieve this. School development planning is not sharply focused and, as a tool for improvement, is ineffective. At the last inspection, leaders were required to improve the use of assessment information and systems to track pupils' progress; this has not happened in the case of mathematics. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses or informing actions which lead to improvement, particularly in mathematics. The leadership of mathematics is unclear in its direction and expectations. Inaccurate self-evaluation paints a picture more positive than the one seen by inspectors. The governing body has not done enough to challenge these shortcomings. A significant proportion of parents who returned questionnaires expressed views which pointed to concerns about leadership and management.

The school has more success in improving other areas of provision, including: Reception, Key Stage 1, literacy, music and art. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and provision for children in the Reception classes is good. This results in them making good progress in all areas of learning. Literacy has been the focus for improvement and provision has benefited from strong leadership in this area. Music and art offer a great deal of enjoyment, enliven pupils' creative learning, contribute positively to cultural development and enrich the curriculum. Attendance is above average.

The quality of teaching across the school is too variable and is inadequate overall. Often,

teachers' expectations are too low, pupils' work lacks sufficient challenge and the use of assessment is limited. Teachers are attempting to inject creative methods of learning into lessons but these are sometimes executed without enough insight and skill to enhance learning. The school's leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about and sustain improvements in teaching and learning of the magnitude that could be reasonably expected since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 by:
 - developing expertise in teaching the subject
 - ensuring rigorous assessment which involves pupils in evaluating their own and others' progress
 - raising the expectations of pupils and the level of challenge offered in mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - establishing a clear direction and high expectations across the school aimed at raising attainment
 - increasing the governing body's ability to hold leaders to account for the school's work
 - implementing a robust system to monitor and evaluate the school's work, particularly the quality of teaching, in order to better inform priorities
 - increasing the school's capacity to improve by strengthening school development planning
 - improving the school's engagement with parents.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Children leaving Reception start Year 1 with skills and abilities that are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average by the end of Year 2. There is an improving trend in Key Stage 1, especially in reading and writing as a result of the strengthening profile of literacy. Currently, progress in English lessons is good in Years 1 and 2 as teaching motivates pupils to make strong efforts and encourages them to learn together effectively. In 2009, attainment in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 was above average and pupils made satisfactory progress in mathematics. However, by the end of Year 4, attainment in English is average and below average in mathematics.

In Years 3 and 4, current progress in mathematics is inadequate because pupils are not well enough engaged in learning. Even when lessons are satisfactory, not enough emphasis is placed on checking that pupils have secured the mathematical knowledge and skills taught. There is no significant variation in the progress of different groups of pupils. Those pupils who have learning difficulties or additional language needs also

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

make inadequate progress in mathematics by the end of Year 4, even though they are given additional learning support.

The great majority of pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, but expectations of them are not high enough. A small number of parents reported concerns about behaviour at playtimes. Whilst pupils contribute satisfactorily in school and beyond, they are capable of much more. Their knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyles is developed well by the Healthy Schools Award and ActiveMark. Pupils put into practice what they have learned. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of education is inadequate because of their underdeveloped skills in numeracy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is not strong enough to ensure that the planning and delivery of lessons is of a consistently high quality to support effective learning, particularly in mathematics. Teaching has not been developed sufficiently by school leaders. Where teachers try out new approaches aimed at enhancing pupils' enjoyment and engagement in learning, these initiatives are not thoroughly evaluated. Teachers know the importance of

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

assessment. Some use it well to plan the curriculum and pupils' work, but others do not make the most of questioning and summing-up and these lessons lack a sharp focus to promote learning. Here, expectations are too low and the challenge in pupils' work does not reflect their capabilities. In a music lesson, where Samba drumming was being rehearsed, the expertise and enthusiasm of the teacher demonstrated that, in response to high expectations, pupils met the challenge and achieved well.

A thematic approach to integrating subjects across the curriculum is being implemented, although the school recognises the need to develop more effective ways of monitoring the development of skills in English and mathematics. The curriculum is enriched with clubs and after-school options such as French, Spanish and Latin. The pupils' creative talents are well catered for through art and music. Their carnival parade included very impressive drumming and costumes produced by pupils, staff and visiting artists.

The school has a number of satisfactory partnerships with other schools and local organisations to help it care for and support pupils. Arrangements for transition are sound with nurseries sending children into the Reception Year and similar arrangements for Year 4 pupils moving on to middle schools. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English receive appropriate care and pastoral support which helps them to settle.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
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?

Senior leaders do not provide a clear direction to the school's work; they have not adequately demonstrated the capacity to improve key areas of work, in particular, the quality of teaching and learning. However, the good leadership of provision for literacy and the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure outcomes in these areas are good or improving.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is especially weak. The school's lesson observation process lacks the rigour to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching or bring about the improvement needed. Leaders do not have a secure understanding of why progress in mathematics is inadequate and this limits opportunities for pupils to develop important skills for the future. The governing body has not challenged the school sufficiently on its weak self-evaluation. There is more rigour in the governing body's oversight of the school's safeguarding policy, which supports the effective arrangements for keeping pupils safe. The school has a sound awareness of its own

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community and its religious identity in particular. This extends to links with, and support for, schools and charities in developing countries.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Consistently effective teaching ensures children learn and make good progress. Their progress is closely monitored and daily assessment is used effectively to plan the right level of work for each child. Lesson planning makes strong links between all the areas of learning in children's activities so that their learning is spontaneous, enjoyable and creative. Expectations are high. A good balance is struck between learning that is formal, informal, indoors and outside. Children have a wide range of good, free-flowing opportunities to explore and experiment or work together on similar tasks, such as writing or counting. Writing is children's weakest area when they start their reception year. They are quick to develop their knowledge and skills of linking sounds and letters as this is well-taught. Stories make children's learning of literacy skills lively, exciting and enjoyable. They concentrate well on writing tasks and apply good efforts with their work. Children behave well and develop good friendships. Strong leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage comes from a high level of expertise in managing this provision. Good arrangements are in place to ensure children are safe and make a smooth transition to Year 1.

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

Approximately 40% of questionnaires were returned and these show some mixed views of the school. The questionnaires indicate that children enjoy school and are safe. While a few parents expressed a concern about behaviour, inspectors found this to be satisfactory during the inspection and that pupils enjoy school, attend well and are safe. The questionnaires also indicate that most parents feel they are kept informed about their children's progress and the overwhelming majority are helped to support learning at home. However, a few have concerns about their children's progress and believe individual needs are not met. Inspectors judge that pupils' progress is not as good as it should be and while all respondents think teaching is good, inspectors found that, while some is good, overall, it is inadequate. Most concern from parents was about the leadership of the school and the quality of some of the communication between home and school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edmundsbury 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	66	24	29	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	54	33	40	3	4	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	49	34	41	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	40	39	48	8	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	49	60	33	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	41	46	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	56	33	40	2	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)	27	33	39	48	2	2	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	38	40	49	10	12	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	34	40	49	10	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	33	42	51	11	13	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	30	37	27	33	18	22	4	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	52	34	41	4	5	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.



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edmundsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3BJ

Thank you for your warm welcome and friendliness during our visit. I want also to thank all of you who agreed to meet for a discussion with inspectors. This letter is to let you know what inspectors found.

These are some of the positive features of your school:

- children in the Reception classes are given lots of interesting activities to do which they enjoy and they are making good progress
- the work you are doing in English is improving, especially in Years 1 and 2, and this is beginning to improve how well you do in reading and writing
- you have done much impressive work in music and art for the carnival. Your costumes and banners are amazing and your Samba drumming is very accomplished.

In some areas the school does not do as well as it should and this means some of you do not learn as well as you could. To improve your school, we have asked your headteacher and governors to do the following things:

- improve teaching in mathematics so that you all make better progress in learning, especially in Years 3 and 4
- check carefully that the work you do in lessons is helping you make better progress
- keep your parents well-informed about your progress and the steps the school is taking to make improvement
- plan carefully the actions they are going to take to make sure things get better.

This is a lot to do and your school will need extra help to make it happen. Inspectors will be visiting regularly to check on progress. You can all help by continuing to work hard and by attending well. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector

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