

Lavenham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124540
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359694
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Greatrex

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ashley Fitzwater
Headteacher	Jan Foster
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed parts of seven lessons involving the work of three teachers and learning support assistants working with classes, groups or individual pupils. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. The inspectors evaluated the school's work, and looked at school documents, external monitoring reports and development planning. Responses from 63 parental questionnaires were analysed as well as those from school staff and pupils.

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

- Are the high reading standards are being maintained?
- Is the school is looking beyond the immediate vicinity to help prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society?
- Do the staff roles in monitoring curriculum subjects have sufficient impact on pupils' progress?

Information about the school

Lavenham Community Primary School is much smaller than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils come from White British families, with a small number of other White and Mixed heritages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These pupils have a wide range of needs including autism. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Children start full-time in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception class) at age four. The school runs a breakfast club and there is also a pre-school run independently of the school on the site. The school has Healthy School and Activemark awards.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Lavenham Primary is an outstanding school that develops every aspect of every pupil. Parents and carers typically comment, 'It is very good, not just at an academic level but in instilling confidence and self-belief in the children.' and, 'I am completely confident that my child is ready to make the transition (to middle school) both academically and emotionally'.

Very positive relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of the school's success. Pupils work very closely with their teachers and other adults who help them so that lessons flow and no time is lost. An outstanding curriculum cleverly involves pupils in the choice of activities they do. Consequently, they are fully engaged and very keen to participate. Independent and collaborative learning is much better than at the last inspection. The older pupils, for example, start each new topic by brainstorming the activities they might do for homework. Each follows his or her own interests to produce high quality responses which they describe and explain to parents and other members of the local community at an open afternoon.

All aspects of assessment are outstanding so that staff and pupils know what they have achieved and the next steps in their learning. Consequently, staff cater fully for every pupil's needs. All pupils, including those with particular talents and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress because of the personalised provision they receive. Governors are very proud of this aspect of the school; 'Every single pupil is tracked and each has a programme almost tailored to their needs'. The good number of staff in each class recognise when pupils struggle and check the cause immediately, so the pupil loses no learning time. Any intervention or extra support needed is quickly identified and given so that the pupils have tasks closely matched to their current attainment. Equally, particular gifts and talents are catered for, sometimes supplemented through links with local schools. Consequently, tasks are neither too difficult nor too easy, so all pupils do very well. Parents and carers confirm this view; 'Lavenham is a fantastic school, the staff have done all in their power to help my child reach his full potential'.

All staff know each pupil's needs very well, the basis of high quality care, guidance and support. From the moment the headteacher greets each one as they arrive at school, pupils say they know they will be well looked after. They respond by doing their best in school so no lesson time is lost. From the very beginning, they learn about different characteristics they need to develop, such as perseverance and linking new and previous learning. They enjoy their teachers' use of technology to bring lessons alive, and the very relevant and interesting tasks they are given to do.

The school's capacity to improve further is outstanding because a common vision is shared, so all strive for identical goals. There is no complacency because the headteacher

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drives the school forward extremely well. Governors' involvement is excellent; sharing the vision, supporting and questioning its realisation. Strategic leadership is outstanding so the school has a robust and practical review and evaluation cycle which ensures it remains very effective, without over-burdening management. The small number of improvements, suggested by the last inspection, are fully in place and effective. Self-evaluation is very accurate so the school knows its strengths and the areas it needs to improve. However, some of the plans drawn up to make these improvements lack sufficient sharpness so it is difficult for the school to track progress and ensure timely and successful completion. Although local community links are strong, plans to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society are in their infancy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Better prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society by extending national and international links in contrasting locations, and incorporating more meaningful and relevant activities in the curriculum.
- Ensure the targets in the school improvement plan are precise and specific, and include reference to how they will be measured, the time frame for completion and what impact is expected.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment at the end of Year 4, when pupils currently leave the school, is well above that expected by this age in reading, writing and mathematics. For the past five years, pupils have attained overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics significantly above the national averages at the end of Year 2. Reading attainment is particularly high and a significant strength of the school. Mathematics standards are above average and improving because of the recent changes to curriculum and teaching. Pupils' recall in mental mathematics is much improved since the last inspection. Attainment in writing is above average too but, in a school that does not stand still, improvements have begun to raise standards further. Attainment when pupils join the school is broadly average but with wide variations between year groups and between pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have tasks closely matched to each individual's needs and consequently do very well.

Attainment seen in lessons during the inspection was consistent with this data and pupils generally continue to work at levels above those expected for their age. In Year 4, pupils respond well to increasingly challenging area problems, and apply their prior learning very systematically. In Year 2, pupils are proud to use technology to illustrate and describe their work to their class. Their descriptions demonstrate their thorough understanding.

Analysis of each pupil's results shows that progress through the school is excellent. Pupils enter the school ready to learn with excellent attitudes and a thirst for knowledge so that they take full advantage of every opportunity they are given.

Achievement is outstanding and pupils greatly enjoy every aspect of school life, particularly learning with their friends. Pupils say, and parents confirm, they feel extremely safe in school and have a very good understanding of potential hazards, including those on the internet. Pupils themselves understand the purpose and need for risk assessments. Pupils behave well, particularly in class, and this has a positive impact on their learning.

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They eat healthily and have accurate understanding of the need for exercise and sleep. Each can describe a balanced diet and why, for example, a diet only of fruit and vegetables would be undesirable.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school, as 'play leaders' or school councillors thinking of solutions to problems relevant to their lives. This extends to the wider community. Re-designing the children's menu for a local hotel gave pupils an insight into commerce and business. Their basic skills are excellent, so they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Because they enjoy school so much, they attend well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and learning support assistants work very closely together to make effective teams. Staff give pupils activities very closely matched to their levels, This is key to the excellent progress because pupils are always at the cusp of new learning. Collaboration is a good feature of most lessons; pupils share their thoughts and ideas, listen to each other, look for an agreed solution, recognise that this is generally better than any individual idea and know they have used the skill of empathy. Occasionally, pairs of pupils fail to 'gel' and little is achieved. Many techniques are used to enhance learning; music and lighting set the atmosphere for writing; understanding fractions is clearer because a visualiser is used so pupils see as well as hear their teacher's explanation. Thorough planning ensures all lessons flow, although too much can be attempted and learning become a little superficial.

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Pupils respond very well to the good teaching and always give of their best. Their very positive attitudes are consolidated very effectively by teachers' good links to different attributes of learning, such as concentration. Even in assembly, the head teacher talks about her 'learning moment', reminding pupils that learning opportunities are everywhere and life-long. Pupils' answers are always thoughtful and considered because they have excellent learning habits. This extends to assessment, where teachers not only give them a clear understanding of how they are doing, but also many opportunities to check for themselves, and reflect on how they are progressing. Consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of assessment in learning and talk with real knowledge and confidence about what they know and what they need to focus on next.

While emphasising basic skills, the curriculum is broad and balanced offering pupils a wealth of experiences, such as a torchlight woodland walk. Close links with local schools extend pupils' learning further. The choir gives pupils many opportunities to work as part of a much larger group, and to perform in festivals. The curriculum is innovative and exciting so pupils are engaged and enthused. Visits and visitors, such as the recent drama group, enliven and enrich pupils' experiences and stimulate their thinking. A very good range of extra-curricular activities, much enjoyed by all pupils, extend this further. The school thoroughly analyses the impact of the curriculum on raising standards, an improvement since the last inspection.

Staff constantly strive to better understand pupils' perspective and assume nothing. For example, using plans of the site, pupils described potential hazards that worry them. Using these responses, staff talked through their concerns and made some changes, demonstrating the very close relationship between staff and pupils. While all pupils receive excellent care, the care for any potentially vulnerable pupil, or a pupil who is simply worried, is exceptional. The school works very closely with parents, carers and outside agencies so pupils have the support they need to thrive. Transitions from pre-school and to middle school are excellent and enable pupils to make these important steps confidently. Breakfast club offers healthy food and worthwhile pastimes in a pleasant atmosphere.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Because the school is managed so well it runs very smoothly, so the focus is very much on further improvement by asking each other challenging questions. Headteacher, staff and governors embrace opportunities to improve provision. Governance is excellent. A typical example is the planned expansion to Year 6 where governors sought ideas from external

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expertise and so were able to ensure the changes best meet the needs of present and future pupils. A particular strength in the management of teaching and learning is that all teachers know what has been taught before the pupils come to them, and what will be taught after. Skills and techniques are taught in one class to be extended and developed in the next, so that year-on-year and class-by-class, pupils' development is excellent. The school never stands still; for example, subject leaders are currently extending their effective roles so that they are proactively developing and improving provision.

Parents and carers are very active partners, fully involved in the life of the school. They are regularly invited to 'share afternoons' so that they have a clearer understanding of the curriculum and, consequently, can help their children better. They state that they enjoy these opportunities to work with their children, and see them in their school setting. Unfortunately, these occasions are limited to day-time so some parents and carers struggle to attend. Partnerships with nearby schools are very strong and supplement the curriculum with opportunities to work together.

In everything done, staff and governors promote equality and clear procedures exist to tackle any discrimination. As a result, all pupils, regardless of ability or background make the same excellent progress. Pupils' safety is paramount and school policies and procedures very thorough. Testament to the very effective management, any concerns are immediately assessed and appropriate action taken. The school is at the heart of the local community, each fully involved in the life of the other and recognising their mutual interdependence. However, previous international links have been lost and national links are a recent innovation.

Money is spent very wisely, so the school has a good number of well-trained staff able to give pupils the support they need. Pupils appreciate the well-maintained and attractive environment, and consequently feel valued. The grounds are equally well maintained and offer a range of opportunities which pupils enjoy.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

All children make good progress in all areas of learning because they enter Reception with positive attitudes and a curiosity to learn. They enjoy the relevant and interesting activities they are given to do, and respond very positively to the high quality materials and equipment by using them correctly and taking very good care of them. In writing, they use foam, sand, technology and dough to practise letter formation very carefully. An excellent balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities methodically develops skills while giving opportunities for children to consolidate what has been taught or learn for themselves. For example, each built a very different 'home' for their imaginary creature because they have been taught a wide variety of skills and they have good levels of self-confidence. Occasionally, tasks outdoors lack this clarity of purpose and learning dips. Overall, the quality of provision shows a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Relationships are excellent, so children share ideas and learn from one another. By welcoming every child's contribution in discussion, the teacher builds self-confidence and self-esteem so children are not afraid to offer an answer or try new activities. In everything children do, they try to meet their teacher's clear and challenging expectations. Assessment is used very effectively; in a number lesson, some children clearly understood, activities were modified and challenge increased so learning remained at the right level. Excellent quality and number of staff mean that the wide variation in children's attainment levels is fully provided for. Whether a child has special educational needs and/or disabilities, or a particular talent, their levels are accurately assessed and suitably challenging tasks given.

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

The response from parents and carers to the questionnaire was very positive indeed, and nearly all written comments were equally positive. The vast majority of families responded, a far better than average return. Very few parents and carers expressed written concerns. These were about the expansion to a primary school and lack of facilities. One parent expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour at lunchtime. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was good and lunchtime behaviour likewise, although evidence confirms that pupils do have limited space. It is clearly evident that the school has the overwhelming support of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lavenham 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 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 74 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	81	12	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	75	15	24	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	63	22	35	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	63	22	35	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	49	78	13	21	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	62	24	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	59	23	37	2	3	1	2
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)	32	51	27	43	0	0	4	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	57	26	41	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	62	20	32	3	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	51	25	40	1	2	5	8
The school is led and managed effectively	47	75	16	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	81	11	17	0	0	1	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



14 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lavenham Community Primary School, Sudbury, CO10 9RB

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school, and for sharing your thoughts and ideas. Thanks also to Class 3 who did the questionnaire for us. All this information helped us to make our judgements about your school. Like your parents and carers, we think Lavenham is an outstanding school. We have said so in our report for them. In it we mention many good things. Here are a few of the best.

You have excellent attitudes to learning, you always try hard and persevere to do your best.

You like the way your teachers involve you in your learning.

You enjoy school, lessons with your teachers and learning with your friends.

In your lessons and books I saw that you are making excellent progress.

You have an excellent understanding of how well you are doing in your lessons, and your next steps in learning.

You feel safe because you are well looked after.

The adults in school and your parents and carers work together very well to make sure you do well.

There are two main areas where your teachers and leaders can help you to improve. These are:

- giving you more opportunities to find out about people in other parts of Britain and the world, so you are better prepared for later in your lives
- making sure the plans they make to improve your school are very clear so that they know how and when they will be achieved.

We hope you will continue to try your best at school.

Yours sincerely

Robert Greatrex

Lead inspector

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