



Great Massingham Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121087
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 292001
Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006
Reporting inspector Tricia Pritchard HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Weasenham Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Great Massingham, Great Massingham
Age range of pupils	4–11		King's Lynn, Norfolk PE32 2EY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01485 520362
Number on roll (school)	45	Fax number	01485 520362
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Malcolm Hipkin
		Headteacher	Mr Martin Etheridge
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 1999		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006	Inspection number 292001
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

This is a small rural school situated about twelve miles from King's Lynn. There are twice as many boys as girls on roll. A quarter of the pupils have special educational needs, of which four pupils have statements of special educational needs. These figures are above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. A higher than average number of pupils join the school part way through their primary education.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Great Massingham Primary School is a small school with fluctuating numbers in each year group. Together with a high level of pupil mobility, this presents challenges for class organisation. This year, the issue has been successfully addressed by having two Key Stage 2 classes every morning. Thus, for half of the week, pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit from the personal attention offered by being taught in very small groups. The pupils' personal development and well-being are good and pupils enjoy coming to school. They are well cared for and feel safe. Teaching assistants are well deployed, particularly to support pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. Their attainment on entry is usually well below average. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception year. Performance in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been below the national average in recent years and pupils' progress has also been inadequate. However, there are distinct signs of improvement this year; current pupils are now making satisfactory progress. This improvement is attributable to more thorough tracking of pupils' progress, which has led to the setting of individual targets, and to more focused teaching in literacy and numeracy. Weaknesses in writing are being tackled across the curriculum and pupils' writing is getting better. The school is using the support offered by the local authority to good effect. As a result the intensive programme to raise standards in literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. The grouping of pupils for mathematics and English in Key Stage 2, with one teacher teaching the subject throughout the key stage, is helping to ensure better progression in learning. However, tasks are not always challenging enough for higher attaining pupils and insufficient emphasis is placed on extending pupils' thinking through investigative learning and problem solving. In the Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 class, pupils in the Reception year have too limited access to an activity-based curriculum.

Leadership and management, including the school's self-evaluation arrangements, are satisfactory. The headteacher has a substantial teaching commitment which has restricted opportunities to monitor provision. To date, there has been insufficient monitoring of standards and of teaching and learning, but the plans in hand for more regular monitoring are appropriate and have the potential to bring about improvements. The governors are highly committed to the school and to promoting it within the community. The school development plan provides a firm basis on which to raise standards and reflects the school's intention to ensure that this happens. In conjunction with support being given by the local authority, the school is demonstrating that it has the capacity to improve and to meet the aims and objectives of the plan. It offers satisfactory value for money.

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, standards are low. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days' notice of such a visit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Provide more challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils.
- Plan more practical, activity-based learning for pupils in the Reception year.
- Monitor standards and the quality of teaching and learning more systematically and rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are low at the end of both key stages. Pupils' attainment in writing has been particularly weak although there are definite signs that it is improving. Girls do better than boys. Key factors affecting pupils' attainment and contributing to fluctuating results are the high level of pupil mobility, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, attainment on entry, which is usually well below average, and the small number of pupils in each year group.

During the Reception year, pupils make satisfactory progress, particularly in developing their speaking and social skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils do consistently better in mathematics than in reading and writing. In 2006, higher attaining pupils did well in mathematics and results were in line with the national average; the pupils' performance in reading and writing was below the national average. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

Between Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils usually make better progress in mathematics than in English and science. Results fluctuate considerably in Key Stage 2. In 2005, Year 6 pupils attained overall scores which were slightly above the national average but in 2006 results were exceptionally low for English and mathematics, and satisfactory in science. The high mobility of pupils and the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs were key factors affecting performance in 2006.

Past attainment and progress is not a true indicator of the present pupils' progress. An intensive support programme for English and mathematics has just begun and is already having an impact. Pupils' progress and attainment is being tracked more systematically than previously. Teachers are setting pupils challenging targets which focus on what they should, could or must achieve. Currently, pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. The majority are well motivated and keen to learn. The number of pupils who receive awards for good behaviour has increased significantly over the past year. Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. Those pupils who present challenging behaviour are targeted and supported effectively. Attendance is in line

with the national average although it has dropped slightly this year because too many pupils go on holiday during term time.

Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and their social, cultural and moral development is good. Pupils settle well in the Reception class. The school has introduced plenty of initiatives to encourage pupils successfully to adopt a healthy lifestyle such as the offer of free fruit at break time. Pupils are self confident and converse easily with adults. This is a real strength. They enjoy taking responsibility. Those on the school council have plenty of ideas for how to improve the school environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers' planning follows closely national requirements. All teachers are proficient at using information and communication technology (ICT) and particularly the interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning. There is a calm working atmosphere in the classrooms. The teachers know the pupils well and they group pupils according to their perceived learning needs. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils with additional learning needs. However, tasks and activities are not always well differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils and particularly the needs of higher attaining pupils. In whole class lessons, where there is a wide age and ability range of pupils, the teacher's input is not always well pitched to ensure that the youngest pupils fully understand. Until recently, the ongoing monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress throughout the year has not been rigorous enough. The presentation of pupils' work is satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The planning and organisation of the curriculum are satisfactory. The recent move to a thematic approach is complemented by an appropriate emphasis on teaching English, mathematics and science as separate subjects. The selection of topics is well balanced and responsive to local needs and interests; for example, in 2005, the life of local hero, Admiral Nelson, was the topic focus. These topics are planned well to give pupils more opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences. The timetabling of short sessions every day which focus on improving pupils' reading, writing and spelling performance is a good initiative and having a positive impact on developing pupils' literacy skills. Pupils have extensive opportunities to use and improve their ICT skills using lap top computers but non-fiction library resources are not easily accessible or of high quality. More able pupils have good opportunities to attend an extension programme at the local high school. However, in school, the curriculum provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their thinking skills through investigative

work and problem solving. There is scope, too, to plan more practical activities for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

The curriculum is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular clubs including an art club, sports coaching, book club and French club. Pupils are encouraged to stay safe and take physical exercise and so Key Stage 2 pupils have access to cycle training and Key Stage 1 pupils to pedestrian training.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a small rural school where everyone knows one another. There is a good ethos of co-operation and respect. The adult/child ratio is very good. Pupils are well supported pastorally and academically on a day-to-day basis by teachers and teaching assistants. Improving arrangements for tracking progress and setting targets with individual pupils are helping to raise standards. Pupils are well supervised in the playground. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and well co-ordinated. The teaching assistants are experienced and offer good quality support, particularly when working with groups and individuals. Liaison with outside agencies, particularly the behaviour support team, has a positive impact on improving the learning environment for all pupils. 'We feel that the school provides a safe and caring environment for our children.' This view expressed by a parent reflects the views of many other parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Governance, leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is ably supported by committed staff and governors who take their roles seriously. With so few teaching staff, teachers take on many curricular roles and responsibilities. Until recently, their roles in managing subject development have not been well defined. They have not had sufficient time to monitor standards and teaching and learning within their specific subjects. With the introduction of the intensive support programme, this is changing. Staff and governors have a much greater awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school than previously. They are well motivated to see improvements in standards and in marketing the school. The self-evaluation document incorporates an honest and open appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses although the analysis of the progress and attainment of groups of pupils is not as sharp as it could be. The school development plan is a focused document with clear objectives and clear success criteria.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Great Massingham Church of England Primary School, Weasenham Road, Great Massingham, Norfolk PE32 2EY

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school when I came to visit. It was good to speak to so many of you and to see you enjoying school. You are very fortunate to be taught in such small classes and I was impressed with your computer skills. I hope that your Australian pen friends respond to your emails.

While I was at the school, I looked carefully at your work to see how much progress you are making. You are making satisfactory progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. The quality of your writing has certainly improved this term so keep up the good work! I have suggested to your teachers that they check your progress even more closely so that you are all set challenging tasks and do even better. Your school is well equipped with laptop computers and your teachers and governors know that the library now needs more books and better resources. For the very youngest pupils, I have suggested that they have more opportunities to learn through practical activities.

I enjoyed meeting the school council very much. You all have such good ideas for improving the school environment. You are very lucky to live and learn in such a lovely school setting. The behaviour policy is working well, so well done to those who received stickers in assembly for good behaviour and good work. In the playground as well as in school, I noticed how well you look after one another and you are looked after well by your teachers and teaching assistants. They plan interesting lessons for you and the topics each term are chosen to ensure that you have plenty of opportunities to improve your writing.

Your headteacher and teachers have lots of well thought out plans to ensure that you do well at Great Massingham School. The governors too are very committed to ensuring you all have a good education and that the school lies at the heart of the community.

I hope you had a happy Christmas and that your school play went well.

Best wishes

Tricia Pritchard

Her Majesty's Inspector