

Catfield Voluntary Controlled CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121103
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313877
Inspection date	24 November 2008
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	62
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	8
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Angie Johnson
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Blackie
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Catfield Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR29 5DA

Age group	5–8
Inspection date	24 November 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school has three classes and is much smaller than most primary schools. The school was a first school at the time of the last inspection. Since 2006 it has extended the age range it caters for and this year, for the first time, it has pupils up to Year 6. The Reception class caters for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and there is a pre-school playgroup on site which also runs after school clubs and holiday play schemes. There is an exceptionally wide spread of attainment on entry with some children showing advanced skills. However, most enter with attainment that is below the levels usually expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a very small number are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average and a high number have statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school part-way through this stage of their education is above average. Most pupils are from the village but over a quarter come from further afield. The school has the Eco Schools Silver Award, the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with a strong focus on tailoring teaching strategies to meet the particular learning needs of every child. Faster learners are appropriately challenged and they often make rapid progress and attain high standards. The high proportion of pupils who find learning difficult are supported well and make good progress. Achievement is good and pupils do well to attain standards that are broadly average overall. Many pupils find it difficult to write clearly because they have a narrow vocabulary. There are too few opportunities for them to engage in drama and make believe to stimulate their imaginations and extend their vocabularies. Also teachers' expectations of the quality of the presentation of written work are not always high enough.

Teaching is good and is supported particularly well by a good number of skilled teaching assistants. Pupils say that lessons are fun. Staff have detailed knowledge of each individual child and use this well to adjust teaching strategies so that all pupils can achieve success. Staff monitor pupils' progress closely, maintain detailed records and use data well to pinpoint any pupils who seem to be underachieving and might need extra support. Interactive white boards are used well to support teaching and learning, especially when linked to the internet.

Pupils' personal development is good and a particular strength of the school. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the friendships they make. Newcomers to the school receive a warm welcome and settle in quickly. Pupils say that they like the small size of the school and that it is like one big happy family. The school attracts an increasing number of pupils from outside the immediate area because it has developed a reputation for helping those who find learning difficult. Pupils are keen to learn and eager to succeed. One key feature of the school is the way that staff listen intently to pupils' thoughts and opinions. This encourages pupils to offer their views and express themselves confidently. Behaviour is mostly good. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others. They wholeheartedly support charitable fund raising and are enthusiastic about helping a school in Malawi.

The curriculum is good, broad and relevant to pupils' needs. Leaders have made good progress in developing and extending the curriculum from that which met the needs of a first school to one which supports pupils' learning across the full primary age range. Energy conservation, recycling initiatives and how to grow food are key features as pupils learn about the importance of ecology. Consequently, they are acutely aware of their responsibilities to the global community. There is a strong emphasis on extending pupils' key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils enjoy learning to speak Italian, Spanish and French.

Care, guidance and support are good and are top priorities. Close attention is paid to pupils' health, safety and welfare. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure and supports their learning well. Pupils are given good advice about eating a balanced diet and taking plenty of exercise so that they develop a good understanding about how to lead healthy lifestyles. They receive good guidance about how to improve their work and reach the next stages in their learning.

The headteacher leads the school well. She has been the driving force behind transforming the school from a first school that occupied poor premises into a successful primary school that has good accommodation. Parents are delighted with the education provided for their children and report that the school is at the heart of the local community. As one observed, 'There is a marvellous community spirit and the school is a very welcoming place where there is great

enthusiasm for learning which is supported by an enthusiastic teaching team who use a variety of ways to encourage the best from each child.' The governing body, ably led by the chair, monitors the school's performance closely. Governors visit frequently, examine data closely and are as keen as the staff to improve provision, so that every individual pupil can achieve as much success as possible. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and highlights the most important areas for further improvement. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school has emerged from a difficult period when staffing difficulties and building works interrupted the continuity of pupils' learning. It is now entering a more settled phase and is poised to go from strength to strength.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a warm welcome and quickly settle into the life of the school. Children's abilities are assessed thoroughly and information is used well to match work to their widely varying stages of development. Children are very happy in school and show a high level of confidence in talking with adults. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide a stimulating environment that encourages children to explore the world around them and develop their independence. As a result, children make good progress from their different starting points to attain nationally expected standards by the end of the Reception year. An interesting range of activities, firmly rooted in developing children's skills across all areas of learning, makes each day relevant and fun. However, the outside area is not used enough to explore and investigate the natural world. Staff have developed very good partnerships with parents. Meetings are organised where parents can share their concerns and discuss ways in which they can support their children. The broad range of good quality activities help children to make good progress. The leadership and management of teaching and the curriculum are good. The team have begun to implement the new EYFS curriculum successfully.

What the school should do to improve further

- Stimulate pupils' imagination and extend their vocabulary in order to raise standards in writing.
- Improve the quality of presentation in the work that pupils produce.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, often from low starting points. They make good progress in the Reception class and most attain the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6 so that by the end of Year 6 most attain standards that are broadly average overall. This represents good achievement given the many factors that have had a negative impact on pupils' learning in the past. The very small numbers in each year group and the high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs means that statistical comparisons with national averages are not very meaningful. The school's assessment data shows that the more able pupils make good progress and attain standards that are above average. Staff are successful in helping all groups of pupils to achieve their best.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy at school and attendance is good. Pupils are well-behaved and show good attitudes to their work. Pupils feel safe and are confident that, if there are problems, staff will help to sort things out. A good start has been made on involving pupils in identifying how they can improve their work but this is not yet consistently embedded in practice. The school council gets things done. They have, for example, successfully petitioned the highways authority to reduce the speed limit around the school and have persuaded the county council to give them fruit trees. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are well aware of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. At lunch time, wholesome food is served and pupils are encouraged to bring healthy packed lunches. Good development of pupils' basic skills and their willingness to work alongside one another show they are prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, lessons are carefully planned and classrooms are highly organised to support learning. In each classroom, clear displays include prompts to help pupils with spelling, writing and numeracy. However, handwriting and the neat presentation of work are not always given enough emphasis and teachers too readily accept work which is poorly presented. Teaching assistants are well trained and are particularly good at supporting pupils who find learning difficult. Pupils who have challenging emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed quietly and firmly when, occasionally, they find it hard to control their outbursts of strong feelings. Warm relationships and a business-like approach to learning typifies lessons. Pupils respond well and take their work seriously. Staff constantly assess pupils' work and use assessments well to match tasks to pupils' widely varying stages of development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Leaders have successfully extended the curriculum so that it now encompasses all the National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 2. There is a good range of after-school clubs and educational visits to enrich learning. Children themselves organise lunchtime activities, such as the 'Lego club'. The school has identified the need to link subjects together to create interesting themes that capture pupils' interests. Special events, such as Reading Week and Creativity Week, help to deepen learning and provide good opportunities for fun. Pupils participate in multicultural festivals, which extends their understanding of different customs and beliefs well. They study the local environment and develop a good understanding of the uniqueness of East Anglia.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know pupils well and provide sensitive, personal support and pastoral care. This ethos is a platform for the school's work and promotes good relationships. There are good links with the playgroup that shares the site and this paves the way for smooth transition into the

Reception class. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Pupils thrive in a supportive environment. Staff are good at encouraging pupils to express their views and enable them to influence many aspects of school life. The needs of pupils who find learning difficult are supported very well by a highly skilled team. Marking of pupil's work is regular and encouraging but pupils do not have enough guidance about neat presentation. Teachers regularly monitor the performance of pupils and inform them of their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's drive and vision have been key in developing the school from a first school into a flourishing primary school. She has gathered around her a highly committed staff, keen to move the school forward. An ethos has been established that embraces all pupils equally and makes them feel that they are important members of the school community. Governors are closely associated with the school and have worked hard to develop provision, particularly in improving accommodation and resources. The school is now well equipped, well staffed and well placed to improve further. The school has identified the need to develop the roles of subject leaders by sharing responsibilities more widely.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Catfield Primary School, Norfolk, NR29 5DA

What a good school. We thoroughly enjoyed the short time we spent with you. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

Your headteacher is a good leader and has worked incredibly hard to change the school from a small first school into a much bigger primary school. Of course, your school is still much smaller than most, but you told us that is just the way you like it, because its size gives it a family feel. The new buildings are great. A particular strength of your school is how extremely sensible you are. You are polite and well behaved. We particularly liked the way that you help each other and are sensitive to everybody's feelings. You enjoy school and have lots of fun. The way you sang that song about rules in assembly so enthusiastically was impressive. You enjoy learning new things and finding out more about our world. We particularly liked the way you are learning to look after the planet through helping with energy conservation and recycling. Because teachers make lessons interesting, you make good progress. You are good at reading and you are developing a good range of computer skills. You enjoy mathematics and science. We do agree with your teachers that standards in writing should be higher and we all think that you need more help to make your written work neater. Those of you who find it rather difficult to learn new things get lots of help and often do really well. You are good at sport and keep yourselves fit by having plenty of exercise. You know how to stay safe and look after yourselves and others. You go on lots of fascinating visits to places of interest. You develop a good understanding of people's different customs and beliefs.

We think that there are two main things that would help to improve your school. If teachers gave you more opportunities for make believe, role play and drama to stimulate your imaginations, we think you would be able to write more creatively. Also, you need more guidance on how to make you work much neater. We know that you want to do your best and we are sure that if you continue to work hard the school will go from strength to strength.

We wish you every success in the future.

John Messer

Lead inspector