

Lavenham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124540
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	314954
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Ruth Frith

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ashley Fitzwater
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Foster
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
School address	Barn Street Lavenham Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9RB
Telephone number	01787 247350
Fax number	01787 249671

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small, three-class rural school which serves the village of Lavenham and several others nearby. Pupils come from families representing a range of socio-economic backgrounds and the percentage receiving free school meals is below average. Typically, children enter school with attainment that is similar to that seen nationally for four-year-olds but in some years, attainment is above. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below that usually seen. Most pupils are from White British heritage.

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 where pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. The warm and friendly atmosphere together with good teaching helps pupils to achieve well so that by the time they leave school, standards are typically above average. Over the last few years, standards have been higher in reading and writing than in mathematics, mainly because of weaknesses in pupils' mental mathematics. Standards in writing have significantly improved and this is having a positive effect on standards in other areas of the curriculum.

Frequently, there is a buzz of excitement in lessons as teachers challenge pupils to work hard on the interesting tasks provided. Teaching helps pupils' learning to develop systematically over time because the work is matched well to their abilities and they feel able to succeed. The curriculum is innovative and stimulating and recent developments have had a significant impact on motivating pupils and developing their attitudes and learning. Systems to evaluate the impact of these on pupils' progress and standards are not established yet. The successful personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils know how to keep safe and healthy and learn to get on with others. They respect ways of living different from their own and this helps to create a harmonious atmosphere in the school. Pupils' good social skills and their progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) helps prepare them well for the next stage of their education and beyond. Pupils' personal development is good and results in good behaviour and a sensitive attitude to others. Pupils also make a positive contribution to the school community and beyond through their work in the school council and involvement in local events.

Effective leadership, management and governance result in the school providing good value for money. The headteacher gives excellent direction to school improvement and involves all in the decision making process. Consequently, staff feel valued and morale is high. Good self-evaluation procedures have helped the school community to reflect on how well they are doing and judgements correspond well with the inspection's findings. This process reflects the consistent drive for improvement. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This helps them to set realistic but challenging targets with the headteacher and thereby raise the expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Parents show by their comments that they are pleased with what the school offers. 'This is a well run school with excellent teachers, happy pupils and parents' 'We are seeing wonderful teaching methods and new ways of teaching children to learn'. Good improvements since the last inspection, together with outstanding leadership from the headteacher, the commitment of staff and governors, and support from parents indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Outstanding aspects of the headteacher's leadership can be seen in the way they have guided developments in the Foundation Stage. These have resulted in significant improvements since the last inspection. Provision is now better with a specific area for outside learning. Teaching has also improved because planning is clearer and assessment more effective, but there is a narrower range of teaching styles used here than in the rest of the school. Children are making good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and this helps

them to settle quickly, behave well and develop good attitudes to school. A clear action plan recognises the need for continued development. This reflects the high expectations of the headteacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement plans to improve pupils' recall in mental mathematics in order to raise overall standards in mathematics to those in reading and writing.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of new curricular developments on pupils' academic progress and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well and make good progress. This prepares them well for their future economic well-being. Because of significant improvements in reception, pupils are now making good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 they have frequently reached standards above the local authority average. Continued good progress in Years 1 and 2, results in pupils typically reaching above average standards in national assessments, as in 2007. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 continue to build on previous learning and achieve well. Currently, pupils in Year 4 are working at levels above those expected for their age in English and mathematics. Pupils reach the realistic but challenging targets set, with a few achieving above this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Provision in these areas promotes a strong school ethos and creates an environment where pupils feel particularly happy in school and do well. Attendance is above average. They quickly understand what is expected of them due to the high expectations of staff, clear guidance and effective school procedures. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is good; they play well together and eagerly make friends. Older pupils show good levels of independence and staff are now in a position to develop this further throughout the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives and this is beginning to affect what they do. As one pupil said whilst using equipment in the playground, 'You need to be out of breath'.

Pupils follow school routines well and act sensibly and safely. Older pupils are readily seen helping those younger and all act sensitively to those new to the school. Pupils recognise unacceptable behaviour and understand the impact of their actions on others. They contribute well to the school and local community, for example, by raising funds and by helping to create a children's menu for a local hotel.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because staff assess pupils' work and progress well and use this information to plan lessons which build systematically on previous learning. Teachers have a good, clear understanding of what they want pupils to learn, and share this with them. Consequently, pupils are clear about what they must do and feel able to succeed. Tasks are matched appropriately

to pupils' abilities and typically generate excitement and enjoyment in learning. Pupils respond well to the challenges set by staff. This is more evident in Year 1 to Year 4, where a wider range of teaching styles is used. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a particularly good understanding of their own learning. During lessons, they frequently identify 'learning moments' when the next step in learning has been achieved or they have developed a much clearer understanding. Teachers are keen to extend the methodologies used in this class throughout the rest of the school. In all classes, teachers use the end of lessons effectively to assess pupils' progress and understanding and consolidate learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A major strength of the curriculum is the way in which it creates excitement in pupils' learning, which, in turn, results in them thoroughly enjoying their time in school. This supports good progress. The focus on reading and writing has helped to raise standards above those in mathematics where insufficient attention has been placed on encouraging pupils' mental recall. The relatively recent introduction of the International Primary Curriculum has helped to make good links between subjects with a focus on learning through enquiry and observation and a more comprehensive study of different countries. This is motivating pupils well and raising their levels of interest. It is less clear how this curriculum affects their progress and standards although early signs are promising. Improved provision and staff expertise in ICT are helping to stimulate pupils' learning and raise standards. Popular clubs, visits, visitors and activities help pupils to develop new interests and extend skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good support, care and guidance given to pupils help them develop into happy and confident learners. Good relationships between staff and pupils result in pupils being confident to ask for help when needed and use of the 'worry box' supports the school's aim that no child should go home worried. Pupils who find learning difficult or have medical problems are supported well, due to the school's good support systems and good links with outside support agencies.

Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning generally and play a significant role in supporting these pupils. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, reporting incidents and health and safety are all secure. Academic guidance is particularly good for pupils in Years 3 and 4 where they are given the tools to become more self-aware and better learners. Consequently, they have a clear understanding of what to do to improve their work. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are not so aware although most know what their literacy and numeracy targets are and work enthusiastically towards them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides an outstanding lead to colleagues, who work as a strong team sharing her vision and sense of purpose. Staff are encouraged to be innovative and receive good support to enable them to be successful. This results in good teaching, a stimulating curriculum and good pupil progress. Staff take on a variety of management responsibilities successfully, and the monitoring and evaluation of reading, writing and mathematics is good. This allows

challenging targets to be set in these subjects. Practice is not yet as effective in other subjects. Good systems are in place to check how well the school is doing and identify what it could do better. These have been instrumental in the significant improvement made since the last inspection. The views of all members of the school community are taken into consideration and parents are kept well informed of any necessary changes. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness, give effective support through their visits to school and work in committees, and play an important role in school development.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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 the 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

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.

Annex A

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 September 2007

Dear Children

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

You will probably remember that I recently visited your school and I am now writing to let you know what I found out. First, thank you for making me feel so welcome. I enjoyed talking to you and was very pleased to see that you really enjoy school and are happy there. These are some of the best things about your school.

- You try hard and reach standards above those I sometimes see in other schools.
- You behave well because you are interested in what you are doing.
- You get on well with each other and older pupils really help the younger ones. I saw play leaders working hard at lunchtime to develop games.
- You come to school regularly and on time. Well done!
- All the staff work well together as a team so teaching is good.
- Staff look after you well and you feel safe in school. I was pleased to hear that you would talk to a member of staff if you had problems.
- I was particularly impressed to see those of you in Years 3 and 4 who are working hard to become better learners. I enjoyed sharing several of your 'learning moments'.

Mrs Foster works exceptionally well and staff and governors give her lots of help. They are all keen to make the school even better so have agreed to help you improve your mental mathematics. I know you will support them in this and do as well as you can. Also, they are going to check how changes in the things they teach you are helping you to make better progress and reach higher standards.

I left your school confident that it will continue to improve and wish you all well. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Additional Inspector