

Nacton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124738
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	315039
Inspection date	15 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kelvin Silburn
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Ditton
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
School address	The Street Nacton Village Ipswich Suffolk IP10 0EU
Telephone number	01473 659370
Fax number	

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Pupils' progress towards their individual targets, particularly in maths.
- The outstanding features of teaching that have an impact on progress.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in improving the quality of provision and improving achievement.

Evidence was gathered from observing part lessons across the school and observing maths lessons at Key Stage 2. Pupils' work, parent questionnaire returns and school documentation were also scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils are from a White British background with a small proportion from minority ethnic groups. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of those with general or specific learning difficulties is broadly average. The proportion of these pupils, including those with a statement of special educational needs currently in Years 2 and 6 is well above average. When children enter the school, their attainment varies considerably from below to above average from year to year. This year it is slightly below average. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school has gained the Artsmark Gold Award for its high level of commitment to the arts. It also has Healthy Schools and Investor In People status. The school is involved in a variety of local and national school improvement and enrichment activities. These include recognition as a Guardianship School in partnership with Sutton Hoo to raise pupils' awareness of the environment for the future. The school achieved a national Education Award in 2005 and 2006 for developing communication skills and collaboration. It was also invited to participate in the national Global Challenge in 2007 where the school is paired with Katha School in New Delhi. A major building programme is taking place in the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Nacton Church of England Primary is an outstanding school and this is accurately reflected in the overwhelmingly positive views of parents. One parent wrote, 'The school, which has such a very happy caring family atmosphere, has gone from strength to strength, constantly seeking ways to improve by consulting parents and pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school immensely.' Another parent wrote, 'My son wakes up every Saturday and Sunday morning really wanting to go to school, which shows how much he enjoys and loves going to Nacton School.' Outstanding leadership and management, and especially the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, have led to exceptionally good teaching and curriculum, and excellent care, guidance and support. Consequently, standards have risen consistently in recent years and the vast majority of all pupils are making outstanding progress towards their individual targets during their time in school. The 2007 results were the best ever achieved by the school.

In 2007, pupils in Year 2 reached above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and made outstanding progress against their individual targets. Similarly, Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in mathematics and science and well above average standards in English. All Year 6 pupils, including those who find learning difficult and the more capable pupils, made outstanding progress against their challenging individual targets in English, mathematics and science. The range of ability in the small groups of pupils taking the national tests varies considerably from year to year. The numbers of pupils leaving or joining the school other than at the usual times of admissions also affects results. Currently, standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and are broadly average in Year 6. Nevertheless, given their starting points, pupils are making outstanding progress and nearly all will meet or exceed their targets.

The key strengths of the outstanding teaching that contribute to this excellent progress include high expectations, very good subject knowledge and a brisk and lively lesson pace. Teachers also maintain extremely good relationship with pupils, who in turn show the greatest respect by listening to and following instructions, behaving exceptionally well. As a result, their learning is outstanding and they make excellent progress. The very wide range of outstanding opportunities for enriching learning include Spanish taught throughout the school and the 'Activates' programme of physical exercise. In addition, there are the twice-weekly circus skills workshops, golf, chess, and a wide range of sporting activities including multi skills and tennis. Pupils also participate in a drama club and art club. The curriculum considerably enhances personal development, through a very well implemented programme of personal, social and health education and also through strong links with local businesses and the community. For example, the school was in the final nine of the national Healthiest School Award 2007 for promoting a healthy lifestyle and high quality of school meals.

The excellent range of visitors to the school includes professional artists, poets and storytellers and an 'Anglo Saxon warrior'. Pupils' learning is also greatly enhanced by the wide range of visits, including a residential visit to Derbyshire for Years 5 and 6. They spent six weeks working with professional actors in the Primary Shakespeare Project. There are very strong links with partner schools, including a local special school and three other schools of the Federation of Small Schools, that broaden participation in group activities and extend the variety of support and curriculum programmes for pupils. The excellent links with the Katha School in Delhi through a business partnership have provided an excellent focus for promoting literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). They enhance pupils' personal development and well-being considerably, particularly their cultural development. The Artsmark Gold award

has been achieved because of the extremely high involvement of pupils in the arts, which has an impact on achievement and promotes considerable enjoyment. For example, all pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn a brass instrument and all play in the school band, with some achieving Grade 1 music exams. All pupils are involved in the annual whole-school production, written by a member of staff, have the opportunity to take part in circus skills performances and in producing digital PowerPoint presentations. The range of opportunities includes entering competitions, such as poetry anthologies, and the school has had the winning poems published every year for the past eight years. Pupils have also gained successes in local and national arts competitions. All pupils are fully included in all school activities. For example, those who find learning very difficult are fully included in performances such as African drumming.

The excellent care, guidance and support have a very positive impact on pupils' personal development. All safeguarding is fully in place, so pupils rightly say that they feel very safe and secure at school. Support provided for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding and leads to their excellent progress and greatly increased confidence. Pupils' extremely good personal development and well-being, including outstanding spiritual moral social and cultural development, is seen in the excellent contribution they make to each other as partners who support each others' learning in lessons. Older pupils help to organise play activities for younger ones. Pupils' attendance is good. They are very concerned about their environment and all eat very healthily and exercise extremely well. School meals are totally organic with a very high uptake by pupils. Water is freely available and pupils benefit for eating free fruit at breaktimes. Pupils' economic understanding is excellent; through the mini enterprise initiative for designing, making and marketing slippers, they are acquiring business skills at a very early age. They apply mathematics, literacy and ICT in real-life situations extremely well. Very strong staff commitment to school improvement, with the effective support of governors, have ensured outstanding progress since the last inspection and all issues have been tackled effectively. There has been exceptional improvement in ICT since then; interactive whiteboards are used consistently to provide imaginative and stimulating learning activities. Pupils in Year 2, for example, made multi-media presentations of popular traditional tales. The first phase of the building programme has been managed extremely well and the school is planning to extend and enrich learning opportunities, such as provision for food technology, when the second phase is complete. The school continues to develop, piloting new initiatives and being recognised at the forefront of school initiatives within the county. As a result, it provides excellent value for money and has an outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Foundation Stage make outstanding progress because teaching sets the highest expectations for their achievement, and learning opportunities are highly individualised and closely matched to needs. Children settle very quickly into the very happy environment of the Reception class because all staff make them feel valued, secure, increasingly confident and ready to learn. Consequently, children thrive and make at least good and often outstanding progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development. Interesting activities are planned as a result of highly effective teaching and excellent support from teaching assistants. Staff maximise the use of the attractive outdoor area where children become totally absorbed in very well planned learning activities, such as planting and growing seeds and vegetables that will later be used in the school kitchen. Their considerable enjoyment was evident as they rushed outside to play

and learn as soon as the doors were opened. The extremely well furnished and resourced classroom creates an imaginative and stimulating environment for all children. Outstanding leadership has ensured that teaching has rapidly improved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the new buildings are used to maximum effect to further extend and enrich pupils' learning enjoyment and achievement.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

16 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nacton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Nacton, Suffolk
IP10 0EU

Thank you for being so friendly and making me feel so very welcome when I visited recently to inspect your school. I was very pleased to hear all the excellent things you said about your school. I agree with you that your school is outstanding and provides you all with an excellent education. You told me how much you love your school and I noticed what a wonderful friendly atmosphere there is, and how well you look after each other and make friends. You all work very hard and try your very best so that you make excellent progress in learning. I was particularly impressed with the enterprise skills Year 6 were developing making slippers, and the wonderful computer stories that Year 2 had made. This helps to prepare you extremely well for when you leave school. You all behave extremely well and you show great respect for others. You stay very healthy in school, taking care to eat healthy food and especially by taking lots of exercise. You act very responsibly in school and carry out your duties very well. You really like your teachers, you all say how much they help you to learn, and I agree with you that teaching is excellent. You also have a wonderful range of activities in school, such as circus skills, recorders, golf, art and drama clubs. Everyone in school cares for you extremely well and your headteacher and all the staff are providing you with an excellent education. As a result, you are all making excellent progress towards your learning targets.

I have asked the staff to use the new buildings to provide even more exciting things for you to do and learn. You can help by continuing to do your very best and looking after all the wonderful resources you will have.

Thank you again for telling me about your school and continue to work hard.

Best wishes,

Declan McCarthy Lead inspector