

Orford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124777
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	315055
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev David Murdoch
Headteacher	Mr Richard Dediccoat
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	School Lane Orford Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 2LU
Telephone number	01394 450281
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Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This primary school is much smaller than average. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, but the percentage known to be eligible for a free school meal is well below average. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected for four-year olds. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is much higher than generally found. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the percentage with statements of special educational need is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school gives pupils a satisfactory education. It is improving rapidly because of the headteacher's good leadership and the measures he has introduced. The school is very much at the heart of its community and is highly regarded by parents and carers. One parent's comment was typical of many when she said, 'I am very impressed by the way in which all staff are friendly and encourage and help the children.' Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and by the time they leave standards are broadly average. Recently introduced strategies to improve pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics are leading to higher standards, but have not been in place long enough for their impact to be fully evaluated.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils know how to stay safe, and are very aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They make an outstanding contribution to their community, and they are very caring and supportive of each other. Their creation and maintenance of an eco-friendly environment are impressive, as illustrated by the excellent garden managed by the pupils.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are good at encouraging pupils to do their best and at celebrating their achievements. This does much to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem. One pupil commented, 'If we get stuck our teachers are always ready to give us all the help we need.' Even so, in some lessons the work set is not sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. The curriculum is good and an excellent range of additional activities and educational visits enhance pupils' learning significantly.

The school provides pupils with good care, guidance and support. Arrangements to help pupils who are at risk of falling behind are increasingly effective in meeting their needs. Teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and provide them with helpful guidance about how to improve their work. However, some pupils are not sufficiently aware of their learning targets and how these can be achieved.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and accurately evaluate the quality of the school's performance. There is clear vision focussed on improving pupils' rate of progress and standards. For example, the headteacher has introduced a series of measures, such as the careful tracking of pupils' progress, that are leading to improvements in progress and standards. These developments show the school's good capacity for continued improvement. Governors are supportive and proud of the school's work. They fulfil their role with increasing vigour, and are becoming more able to challenge managers and staff and to guide developments. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the key issues identified at that time have been addressed successfully.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage are often taught as a separate group. At other times they work alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. This ensures a good balance between activities led by adults and opportunities to work independently. Children start school with attainment close to that expected for their age, although their communication and language skills are sometimes below that level. Overall, they achieve satisfactorily, but make especially good progress in

personal, social and emotional development. Teachers and teaching assistants assess children's progress frequently and accurately. As a result, they plan activities that are matched closely to children's learning needs. When children enter Year 1, standards in all areas of their learning are close to those expected for their age. Recently introduced strategies to improve children's communication and language skills are starting to have some success, but they have not been in place long enough to achieve their full potential.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give more able pupils work that consistently challenges them.
- Fully apply the recent strategies to improve pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics.
- Ensure all pupils understand their targets and how these can be used to improve their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory, and pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress, as do those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, although satisfactory, sometimes that rate of progress slows in Years 3 to 6. This is mainly because of the above average number of pupils who join or leave the school during the course of each year. For example, this applies to half of the pupils currently in Year 6. As a result, the school has less time to influence their progress. By the time pupils leave, standards in the Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. There is a tendency for test results to fluctuate because of the differing abilities and specific learning needs of the smaller than average year groups. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently broadly average. Recent strategies to enhance all pupils' skills in English and mathematics are already showing benefits. Pupils achieve well in art, design and technology, music and physical education (PE).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils clearly enjoy their education and their attendance is above average. Their behaviour is outstanding, and they show good understanding of how to live safely and work extremely well with others. Older pupils care for younger ones in an exemplary way. The school has a very distinctive Christian ethos, as befits its church status, and attaches significant importance on pupils' spiritual and moral development, which is excellent. Pupils' social and cultural development is equally impressive and enhanced greatly by assemblies and participation in the arts. They have an excellent understanding of how to live in a healthy way as shown by the food they choose and their very active participation in physical exercise. Pupils' acquire the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) satisfactorily. Their highly developed social skills prepare them well for the next stage of education and for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are often very knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and the school makes good use of their specialist expertise. For example, teachers who have particular skills and enthusiasm for these subjects teach French and music. Teachers make lessons enjoyable and interesting, but more able pupils are not always challenged enough to make better progress. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning and apply themselves well because teachers promote pupils' self-esteem effectively and celebrate their achievements and efforts. Teachers use ICT well to support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants provide good support, especially when working with groups of pupils who are at risk of falling behind. However, there are times during whole-class teaching when they are not fully involved and pupils do not benefit sufficiently from their skills. Teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and marking provides pupils with helpful information about how to address their errors and improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The organisation of the curriculum allows pupils to learn in whole classes and in small groups, and there is little chance of pupils losing interest in the good range of work provided. An excellent range of additional activities enhances the required curriculum. Thursday afternoon is always special activity time, in which pupils from different age groups work together at an exciting range of activities, often encompassing art, PE, music and elements of personal and social development. The curriculum enables pupils to benefit from the links that exist between subjects. In the excellent 'EastFeast' project, pupils help to develop the grounds and grow produce to supply the school kitchen. This project gives them outstanding opportunities to apply their artistic, mathematical and scientific knowledge and to gain understanding of healthy living. The school also has a weather station that provides data for the Meteorological Office and other official bodies. Significant emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' artistic and creative abilities. This is exemplified by the highly regarded school productions, the most recent of which was 'Bugsy Malone'. Excellent links with other schools and the community, including with local industry, are strong features of provision and enhance pupils' understanding of future economic independence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety are fully in place and the school provides a very secure learning environment. The headteacher has introduced new arrangements to track pupils' progress. These arrangements enable teachers to respond to any concerns with increasing success, often through teaching pupils in small groups with a clear focus on developing specific skills. However, not all pupils understand what their targets mean or how they can be used to improve their work. Parents and carers are very supportive and have very positive views of the school. Arrangements to keep parents and carers informed about their children's progress and about the work of the school, for example through the school's website, are good. Even so, some parents say they would like more information.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Staff work closely together under the good leadership of the headteacher, forming a cohesive and mutually supportive team. The headteacher has introduced a series of measures that are already having a very positive impact on the work of the school and are leading to improvements. Amongst others, there are new arrangements that enable the school to monitor and evaluate the quality of its work accurately and form a vision for future improvement. Suitably challenging targets are set and while these were not met in 2007, the school is on course to meet them successfully in the current year. Several governors are new to their role, but initiatives such as 'governor of the month' are enabling them to have an increasingly detailed and accurate view of the school's strengths and of what needs to be improved. Many governors are regular visitors to the school and often help in classrooms, but many visits do not focus specifically on areas for improvement. Governors work closely with the headteacher and staff in contributing to the school's development planning. They also ensure that the school uses the resources at its disposal wisely.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	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?	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?	3
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	3
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	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

4 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Woodbridge IP12 2LU

Thank you for telling me all about your school during my recent visit.

It is an improving school and there are many things that it does well. I think your behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. You are kind and helpful towards each other, as well as being courteous and well mannered. For example, lunchtimes are a most enjoyable social occasion, especially when you eat the vegetables that you grow in the school garden. Your school cares for you very well and makes sure you are safe. Your teachers make sure that your progress is at least satisfactory. Lessons are often enjoyable and interesting, and you have the opportunity to take part in an excellent range of additional activities. Your school productions and the 'EastFeast' project are outstanding. I know you are looking forward to when your kitchen is built and you can cook the garden produce yourself.

In order to make your school even better, I have recommended that Mr Dediccoat and the staff:

- make sure that the work set for those of you who learn quickly is challenging enough
- give you even more help to improve your basic skills in English and mathematics
- be sure that all of you know your subject targets, and what you need to do to reach them.

You can help by listening carefully when your teachers explain what you need to do to make your work even better to reach your targets.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead inspector