

Corton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124727
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328201
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	66
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Steven Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Cunnane
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Street Corton Lowestoft Suffolk NR32 5HW
Telephone number	01502730596
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small primary school serves the seaside community of Corton. Over a third of the pupils come from outside the village. The school provides additional after-school care, the Corton Kidz Club, for up to 16 children. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) only attend school in the mornings until the spring term. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is broadly average. The school has Investors in People and Healthy Schools status. It has achieved the Active Mark and is a member of the Football Foundation Scheme.

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, which lies at the heart of the community and provides outstanding care and support for its pupils. Consistent and very effective systems for fostering good relationships, personal responsibility and concern for the needs and aspirations of others have resulted in pupils' outstanding personal development and wellbeing. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff are constantly seeking ways to improve their school, which places it in a good position for future development. As a governor and parent said, 'This is an evolving school that does not rest on its laurels...it's what the school does!'

Pupils make good progress from their average starting points. In the national assessments for seven-year-olds, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently just above average. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards in English, mathematics and science are securely above average and individual pupils meet or exceed their challenging targets.

Pupils' progress is good because they are taught well. Teachers plan work to meet the needs of the different ages and abilities in their classes. As a result all achieve well including those with learning, medical or social needs. Staff make learning fun and make good use of the outstanding curriculum to ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their skills within interesting themes that encompass many subjects. Adults give pupils very good oral guidance in lessons to help them learn effectively. Pupils have targets that have been discussed with them and the oldest pupils are helped to decide for themselves what their targets should be. However, most pupils do not know what they need to do to attain the next levels in their learning. Pupils say how much they appreciate it when teachers write comments to help them improve when they mark their work. However, this does not always happen. Pupils' targets are rarely referred to in the marking and pupils do not regularly evaluate their own performance or that of their peers. Pupils' limited responsibility for their learning is restricting their clear potential for high achievement.

A large range of additional activities, many of which are planned and organised by the oldest pupils, enhances the rich and interesting curriculum. There are excellent links with the community and local organisations, many of whom provide additional activities in school time and after school. Parents, governors and grandparents are regular visitors and the school opens its doors to many local organisations, making it a real community school. Several parents have expressed concern about arrangements in the playground. The playground is small and shared with cars, because there is no parking available elsewhere. This is outside the school's control and it does its best to ensure the safety of children and adults by endeavouring to restrict vehicular movement during school time.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school provides children with a good start to their education. Good links with the nurseries and playgroups ensure they settle quickly into school routines. The mixed-aged class enables children to have a very settled first two years in school. The EYFS is well led and managed, with the headteacher in the class in the mornings and well-qualified and skilled teaching assistants in the afternoon. There are plenty of adults in the class, who support the children very well and encourage them to do things for themselves and to help each other. As a result, their

personal development is outstanding. Children receive high quality care, know how to keep healthy and safe and perform many kindnesses for each other.

The curriculum is good and links well with the curriculum for Year 1; it develops children's skills well through themes or 'topics'. Communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and number skills are taught thoroughly, enabling children to make good progress. The outdoor facilities have improved since the last inspection and extend learning opportunities well. Children have many opportunities to choose their activities or the materials they use from a selection set out by the adults. They have fewer opportunities to develop their own ideas for learning, missing opportunities for them to pursue their own enquiry and interests. Nevertheless, by the end of the EYFS, they achieve well and current children are on track to exceed the expectations for their age. However, this varies from year to year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the marking of pupils' work refers to their targets and gives them a clear indication of what they need to do to improve.
- Provide pupils with opportunities to evaluate their performance and that of their peers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2008, children left the EYFS with higher than average knowledge and skills in most areas of learning, although there were some weaknesses in their skills in communication, language and literacy, especially in linking sounds and letters. This reflects the lower starting points in those areas. The year before, children's attainment on entry was below that typical of four year olds but the majority reached the goals expected the end of Reception. This demonstrates the variations in the small cohorts. These pupils are now in Year 2 and the school's tracking shows that they have made good progress in relation to their starting points. The majority of pupils who were in Year 4 in 2007–2008 did well to meet or exceed the expected level reaching standards which are above average in reading, mathematics and writing. This relates to good progress from the end of Year 2, when standards were just above average. Pupils now in Year 4 are on track to meet their challenging targets and continue to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

When one considers the conscientious way that pupils carry out their many responsibilities, it is difficult to remember that the oldest pupils are only nine. Pupils readily help and support each other and are swift to appreciate each other's efforts. Three footballers in Year 2, talking confidently about their sport in assembly and answering questions, received a good round of applause and there were gasps of appreciation as one withdrew a cup from his bag. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Moral and social codes are very well established. Club leaders and playground 'buddies' have clear job descriptions and carry out their duties extremely responsibly. They have a keen desire to do their best for the school community. Behaviour is impeccable and throughout the school there is a keen buzz of enjoyment. Attendance is good and pupils thoroughly love to come to school. It is very clear that pupils have great respect for their peers and adults. Through their charities and visits from the Salvation Army in Lowestoft, they have a good understanding of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. They care for the environment and have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe. In discussion, for example, pupils expressed concern about the cars

on the playground but knew to be very careful around them when arriving or leaving school. Their strong musical tradition contributes particularly well to their cultural development. Pupils are developing well the skills they need for their future lives well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The excellent relationships between teachers and their pupils generate a good climate for learning so pupils make good progress. Adults encourage lively discussion and adjust their lesson to meet pupils' needs as they arise. Teaching assistants are effective and pupils with learning, medical or social needs are supported well, enabling them to progress similar to that of their peers. Pupils take a great pride in their work. Their books and the many displays around the school are neat and well-presented. Occasionally, the sheer number of adults supporting the pupils makes opportunities for independent learning difficult, in spite of adults' effective questioning. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, telling them how well they have done and sometimes suggesting how they can improve their work. This is not a strong feature of the marking and teachers rarely make written comments about pupils' success or otherwise towards their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is planned to ensure pupils enjoy their learning. The curriculum for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is extremely well-planned to provide pupils with the skills they need. Much of the learning uses other subjects as a focus. This is a particularly strong feature which helps pupils make sense of what they are learning. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were studying the structure of poems, for example, using the teacher's poem about ants in preparation for the afternoon's science lesson. Pupils used grids in their mathematics lesson to draw plans of Roman London for their history topic. Letters written on the computer by pupils describing themselves as 'soldiers' guarding Hadrian's Wall link well with pupils' literacy studies. Excellent links with the sports centre enable pupils to have access to a wide range of sporting activities. Other visitors, such as the lifeguards, visiting musicians and storytellers enrich the curriculum considerably, as do parents and governors. One child proudly pointed out a photograph of her grandfather telling children about times past. Several past pupils return to run clubs for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet national requirements. Very thorough policies for responding to accidents, incidents or sickness ensure day-to-day care is exemplary. All the teachers have been trained to respond to the needs of pupils with medical problems such as allergies, asthma and diabetes. Pupils are expected to take care of their own medical needs so they have exceptionally well-established routines. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills is reflected in pupils' outstanding attitudes and maturity. Strong links with parents, who feel well informed about their children's progress, ensure that school and home work in partnership to ensure pupils get them best support. The school's

systems for tracking pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection and teachers use the outcomes to set work at appropriate levels and provide additional support or challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and staff are united in their desire to do the best for their pupils. This is a highly inclusive school and the headteacher is very clear about the value that pupils of all abilities, including those with physical, social or educational challenges, bring to the school. She takes pupils' views seriously and, although there is no formal school council, ensures they are involved in school development. As this is a small school, all staff are involved in the management of the school and carry out their responsibilities well. Parents are overwhelmingly full of praise for the environment and caring ethos of the school, which is a tribute to the leadership's desire to ensure pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. The school sets challenging targets to raise standards and staff are deployed effectively to support pupils who need it. The headteacher, teachers and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths. Plans for development are relevant and achievable. Governors support the school well and use their range of expertise effectively, whether it be managing the budget or planning for new buildings as the school becomes a full primary school. They are beginning to monitor the outcomes of, for example, the spending on additional support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Community cohesion is good and there are excellent links with the village and local area. The understanding of life in other countries is promoted well but links with other environments and cultures in the United Kingdom are less well developed.

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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?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
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**

12 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Corton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Corton NR32 5HW

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and warm welcome when I visited your school. I had a lovely time. I was very impressed with your behaviour, your excellent enjoyment of school and the way that you all help and support each other. Well done! You are a credit to your good school. Everyone in school takes exceptionally good care of you. You all play your part in making your school a happy place to be.

I saw how hard you all work and it is clear that you make good progress while you are in school. This is because you are taught well and have really interesting things to learn about. It is the first time I have seen a 'Hello' magazine from Roman times! The grown-ups help you to think for yourselves.

Teachers know what you each need to do to make your learning even better. I have asked the teachers to make sure that you know as well. You are so grown up and responsible in the way you run your clubs and take care of each other. You have told me you like it when teachers tell you how to improve when they mark your work. I want you to be as responsible for your learning as you are in all the other things you do. I have also asked them to provide you with opportunities for you to check on how well you think you have done in your work as well as how others have done. Then you will amaze your teachers with your achievements. I am sure you will rise to the challenge.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors run the school well and I am sure that, with your help, it will go from strength to strength.

Yours faithfully

Judith Dawson

Lead inspector