

# Dennington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124728
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	343788
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Williams

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	53
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Cartmell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Val Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Laxfield Road Dennington Woodbridge
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<b>Email address</b>	office@dennington.suffolk.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom visited the school for half a day, specifically to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. Inspectors visited nine lessons during which three teachers were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its monitoring and assessment records, safeguarding documents and those relating to health and safety. In addition, 21 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were considered, together with those returned by pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether boys make enough progress in Years 5 and 6
- how well tracking and target setting are used to promote good progress
- the extent to which monitoring is used to secure improved teaching and learning.

## Information about the school

Almost all of the pupils at this small primary school are from White British backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion in receipt of a statement of special educational needs is average. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the school in the Reception year and are taught alongside pupils from Years 1 and 2. The school has Healthy Schools status. A privately run after-school club is hosted each Wednesday and this is inspected separately. The school entered a formal partnership with another local school in April 2010, and the headteacher leads both schools. When the school was last inspected, in July 2009, it required significant improvement.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. A combination of good leadership and support from the local authority and robust monitoring means that the school now gives a satisfactory education to its pupils. The underachievement identified in the last inspection, particularly amongst boys, has been tackled successfully. Pupils' progress is accelerating and the quality of teaching is improving, although there is still too little of the good teaching necessary to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. Nevertheless, the accurate identification and successful tackling of weaknesses, and the improvement secured this year, show that the school is well placed to improve further. Most parents and carers who took part in the consultation with inspectors report that their children enjoy school. A minority are not so supportive of some other aspects of the school's work, feeling, for example, that their views are not taken sufficiently into account and that the school does not manage behaviour well. The school is keen to improve its communication with parents and carers.

When children first start school, they arrive with widely differing needs and skills, including some who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This varies considerably from year to year, however, as does the proportion in each year group who are capable of reaching the higher levels. Taken overall, most children's skills are typical of this age. Whatever their starting points, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress and, by Year 6, their attainment is average. Consistently good teaching in Key Stage 1 means that these pupils have made good progress this year and are on track to reach, or exceed, their targets. Progress in Key Stage 2 is now satisfactory, although the school's records show that pupils in Year 4 have also made good progress this year. The school has focused on raising attainment in writing and mathematics and, rightly, these important areas remain a priority, particularly to enable more pupils to reach the higher levels and to ensure that pupils use their writing and calculation skills in a wider range of contexts.

Improved systems to assess pupils' attainment and monitor their progress are helping improve teaching because there is sharper information to support teachers when they plan work. Suitable targets are now set for pupils of all ages. Although staff generally cope well with classes of mixed age and ability, there are times when the extra challenge for more able pupils is not sufficiently clear. Teachers identify what they expect pupils to learn in each lesson and this information is regularly shared with pupils at the start of the lesson and recorded in their books. This has a positive impact on their learning when these objectives are reviewed during and at the end of lessons and when

teachers mark pupils' work. This approach is not sufficiently consistent across the school, however, and teachers do not always question sufficiently to check on pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses.

Staff are endeavouring to inject more excitement into the curriculum, for example through initiatives such as the popular enrichment afternoons and by making more imaginative links between subjects. There is more still to do to capture the imagination of some older pupils. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory; indeed, most pupils behave well for most of the time. The incidence of unacceptable behaviour is declining rapidly, but some older pupils do not fully engage in lessons, particularly when they find the activities mundane.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise pupils' attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
  - increasing the challenge for more able pupils
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their calculation skills to solve problems
  - ensuring that pupils use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Improve teaching by:
  - giving pupils clear written and verbal feedback about their learning and how they can improve
  - using questioning more effectively to check on pupils' understanding
  - sharpening pupils' understanding of what they are expected to learn in lessons.
- Enhance pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum by making more imaginative links between subjects to make the learning more relevant and exciting.
- Work with parents and carers to ensure that all feel that their views are taken into account and they understand the school's approach to managing behaviour.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>3</b>
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National assessment results in Year 2 and Year 6 have been broadly average in recent years. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is accelerating because of consistently good teaching. This is reflected in the provisional results for 2010, in which half of the pupils in Year 2 reached the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics, and a third did so in writing. Numbers are small, however, and this means that analysis of national test results must be treated cautiously, as the performance of individual pupils can have an exaggerated effect on the results. Nevertheless, pupils' better progress this year is reflected in their books and lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils were observed successfully writing a thirty-word story within two minutes, a challenging task that

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

showed the teacher's high expectations of them.

Pupils' improvement in Key Stage 2 has been less marked but, even so, the gap between boys and girls has closed and their achievement is satisfactory. In lessons, boys and girls respond best when they find the work interesting and challenging, for example when writing a diary from the point of view of Romeo or Juliet. Pupils' basic skills are improving because of the priority given to them, and pupils are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education. Their knowledge of multiplication tables is improving, for example, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use these calculation skills to solve problems or tackle open-ended investigations. Similarly, pupils' technical writing skills, for example spelling and punctuation, are improving, but there are too few opportunities for them to write at length in other subjects.

The majority of pupils report that they enjoy school, and this is clearly heightened when they find the learning enjoyable and fun. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their spiritual, moral and social development, but their knowledge of cultures other than their own is patchy. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. They are proud of the changes made by the school council, although the council has not yet met this term. The high rate of attendance of recent years has fallen this year due, largely, to unforeseen circumstances, including inclement weather and disrupted air travel.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

**The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development****3****How effective is the provision?**

Lessons run smoothly and relationships are positive. Teaching is improving because astute monitoring has identified weaknesses and these have been tackled robustly. Teachers have sharpened lesson objectives so that they are clearly focused on the intended learning. In the main, pupils of different ability are appropriately challenged. This is most successful in lessons where there is a clear identification of how they will be provided with extra challenge, and where there are clear steps by which their success will be measured. In the best lessons, in Key Stage 1, the teacher questions regularly to check on pupils' progress and to tackle misunderstandings. Elsewhere, pupils are sometimes not clear about what, precisely, they are expected to learn, despite writing the objective in their books. When this is not recognised by the teacher, their progress slows. Work is marked regularly, but older pupils are given too little information about how they can improve.

The curriculum has a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning and enjoyment. Pupils enjoy practical activities most. For example, Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils were delighted to observe the newly arrived chicks and find out how to care for them. The curriculum provides well for aspects of pupils' personal development, for example, promoting pupils' good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, and this is reflected in the successful acquisition of Healthy Schools status. Steps are being taken to improve the links between subjects, but there is still more to do. Enrichment activities are improving and pupils enjoy the good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Staff know each pupil well and better assessment means that they are increasingly able to provide them with appropriate work and extra help. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable are supported well. They are fully included in school life and able to make similar progress to their classmates. Systems for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are new, but are bearing fruit. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to this provision and effective links with external agencies ensure that specialist help is sought, and this is deployed well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Good leadership is central to the school's improvement and has secured the better teaching, learning and assessment necessary to accelerate pupils' progress. There is still more to do to secure consistently good progress, but the headteacher, staff and governors are united in their drive to raise standards further. Senior staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness and what needs to improve. The partnership with another local school, although relatively new, is already contributing to the school's improvement. At present, this is largely through the availability of the headteacher's expertise to both schools, but other staff are becoming increasingly involved. The low expectations identified in the last report have been eliminated. Not all parents and carers are enthusiastic about the school's intended direction, however, and leaders recognise the need to explain the strategic benefits of the partnership more clearly. Other partnerships are strong, including the effective support provided by the local authority. Beneficial relationships with a range of external agencies support potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, thus ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunity whatever their background or ability. The school takes good steps to safeguard pupils. Robust checks are made on the suitability of adults to work with children and the potential hazards presented by activities and visits. Leaders have a good understanding of their impact on community cohesion locally but this is less well developed further afield. At present, the evaluation of this work is largely informal, but there are appropriate plans to place this on a more formal footing.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage



Children enjoy their time in Reception and achieve well. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress, so that most reach and some exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the year. The teacher meets the challenge of providing for a mixed-age class well. Children join with older classmates for some activities and work as a discrete group for others. This works well because the teacher is knowledgeable about how young children learn and keeps a close check on their progress. Planning enables regular access to all areas of learning and there is a good balance of opportunities for them to work under the supervision of an adult or to make choices for themselves. Children have a good knowledge of letters and sounds, their writing is developing well and they count confidently. The new outdoor area is a good response to the weakness identified in the last report, and the setting leader has rightly identified the need to make sure that best use is made of the new facilities. Teaching and support staff work well as a team, contributing effectively, for example, to the assessment of children's learning. These records form helpful portfolios of children's progress that are shared regularly with parents and carers. Good leadership ensures that the provision is evaluated and improved regularly. Children's welfare needs are well met.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school keeps their children safe and helps them to lead healthy lifestyles. They feel well informed about their children's progress. Inspectors endorse these views. A higher than usual proportion disagrees with some of the statements included in the consultation, the largest groups being those who do not feel that their views are taken into account, that the school is led and managed effectively or that behaviour is managed well. Inspectors found that good leadership has been central to the school's improvement this year and that challenging behaviour is rare, but is usually well managed by staff. The school's consultation and communication with parents and carers are typical of schools of this size, but inspectors concur that there is scope to ensure that parents and carers feel that their views are taken sufficiently into account.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dennington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 53 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	33	10	48	3	14	1	5
The school keeps my child safe	9	43	11	52	1	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	29	11	52	3	14	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	20	11	55	4	20	1	5
The teaching is good at this school	5	25	10	50	3	15	2	10
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	29	9	43	5	24	1	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	29	12	57	1	5	2	10
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	29	9	43	3	14	2	10
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	20	11	55	3	15	1	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	33	4	19	3	14	5	24
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	29	7	33	6	29	1	5
The school is led and managed effectively	6	29	6	29	6	29	3	14
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	19	10	48	3	14	3	14

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dennington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,  
Woodbridge IP13 8AE

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed us when we visited your school recently and for meeting with us to give us your views. You gave us lots of helpful information. We found that your school is improving in some important ways and now gives you a satisfactory education. Your headteacher and the other staff have been working well to improve your learning in lessons and to make sure that boys and girls do equally well. You told us you feel safe and you understand the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. We were pleased to see that behaviour has improved. Well done, and please keep it up because it is very important.

So that your school gets even better, we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do four things:

We want them to continue to improve your writing and mathematics. They should make sure that those of you who can do harder work get it, and give you more chances to use your mathematics skills to solve problems and to write more in other subjects.

We want your teachers to make sure you understand the learning objectives, ask challenging questions to keep a close check on your understanding and make sure they give you enough information about how you can improve.

We want your staff to give you lots of exciting things to do so that you enjoy lessons even more.

Most of your parents and carers think that you enjoy school, but a few of them would like the school to listen more to their views. We want the staff to work with your parents to do this and to explain how they help you to behave well in school.

Please all help by doing your best, reading your teachers' comments carefully and concentrate on what they ask you to improve.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams

Lead inspector

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