

Cockfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124694
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	315023
Inspection date	17 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jackie Cousins

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jamie Gwatkin
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Morley
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2004
School address	Church Lane Cockfield Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0LA
Telephone number	01284 828287
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector in one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: Does the Christian ethos and links with the local community have an impact on the care, guidance and support the school provide and does this ensure that pupils' personal development is good? How effectively are Reception to Year 4 pupils' writing and problem-solving skills developed? Is the curriculum planned creatively and does teaching challenge all pupils effectively? How do leaders monitor the achievement of more able pupils in writing and mathematics? Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior teacher, teachers, pupils and chair of governors, observations of teaching and an analysis of school data on standards, documents and parents' questionnaires.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. Nearly all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who find learning more difficult or who have a statement of special educational need is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Very few pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has an award for ecological awareness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cockfield Church of England Primary is a good school and gives effective value for money. Pupils of all abilities are welcomed into the school and integrated quickly into school life. This is partly because Christian values are highly valued by the leaders of the school. Consequently, all staff offer a dedicated and effective level of care, which ensures that pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning and to one another. Older pupils look after younger ones thoughtfully. For example, Year 4 pupils wrote prayers for lunchtimes and then made sure that younger pupils could read them. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles because the school encourages them to eat well and take regular exercise. Staff explain to pupils about the many dangers in and outside school and so they know how to keep themselves safe. The school works carefully to safeguard pupils and procedures meet requirements. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils' understanding of our multicultural society is satisfactory.

A significant strength of the school is the excellent partnership that leaders and staff have with parents. This ensures that pupils' well-being and their needs are always at the heart of any decisions made. Every parent who returned a questionnaire was very positive about the school. One said, 'A super little school that manages to give a good, all-round education. It is a caring, supportive learning environment which nurtures children.' The pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and work extremely well to unite the community and involve its members in school life. For instance, pupils made a film and displays for the school's '150 Year Celebration'. Many local people attended and pupils enjoyed guiding them around the school.

The school's leaders place a great deal of importance on maintaining high standards. When pupils start school, their levels of knowledge are in line with expectations for four-year-olds. They make good progress and standards are above those normally expected by the end of the Reception year. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils attain standards that are significantly above average in Year 2 assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. Good support for those pupils who have learning difficulties allows them to make effective progress. The good use of individual education plans means that these pupils work towards specific and measurable targets. Planning for pupils that are more able consistently challenges them and enables many to attain well. In the 2006 assessments, one-third of pupils in Year 2 attained above average levels. Pupils continue to make good overall progress. They achieve well in reading and writing in Years 3 and 4 and achieve satisfactorily in mathematics. The school has rightly identified mathematics as an area for further development and is already working on it. Consequently, standards in problem solving show considerable improvement in this year's assessments for Year 4 but overall standards of mathematics remain slightly lower than the above average standards seen in reading and writing.

Class sizes are smaller than average in the morning, because the school deploys staff effectively to assist pupils to make good progress. Parents agree that this is a positive aspect of the school and appreciate the one-to-one time that their children have with the teacher or assistant when necessary. Good teaching ensures that pupils make effective gains in their learning in lessons. Teachers expect a great deal from pupils. They explain carefully what they have to do in lessons, which enables pupils to see the relevance of their learning. However, criteria against which pupils can evaluate their success are not consistently on display and so it is not easy for them to measure their achievements. Nevertheless, academic guidance is generally good. During the half-termly 'Assessment Week', teachers evaluate pupils' work thoroughly. Teachers assess

some pupils' work together so that they agree the levels of attainment. They use assessment information well to provide personal targets for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils confirm that teachers sometimes talk to them about these targets during lessons.

Pupils really enjoy many of the exciting activities planned for them and attendance is above national averages. A broad and effective curriculum is in use. Pupils talk enthusiastically about many things that they do at school. They say they really like the topic work, art, writing and mathematics. They have satisfactory opportunities to use information and communication technology. The school is always looking for ways to improve and so is refining its planning so that it can create more projects where several types of skills are taught at one time.

Very good leadership from the headteacher and governors and their effective use of self-evaluation have brought about many improvements since the last inspection. The tracking of pupils' progress more clearly identifies those who are not making the progress that they should. Thorough monitoring of all groups of pupils, including the more able, ensures that pupils reinforce any key skills they have not fully grasped. As a result, the school largely met challenging targets for raising attainment this year. The school has enriched pupils' experience in school with greater use of specialist teaching in physical education, music and French. Subject leaders work well to develop their areas of learning and the school is in a good position to continue to improve in the future. Resources support pupils' learning effectively but the equipment in the outside area for Reception children is rather basic.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Effective leadership and management mean that pupils have a good start to their education. Children settle quickly into school life because good links with the pre-school are in place. They behave well and learn to cooperate effectively because of staff guidance and management skills. Good support for children from minority ethnic groups allows them to achieve effectively. Children make good progress, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, because teaching uses practical methods well. Activities keep them interested and allow them to develop skills of independence consistently. Children's good progress in literacy, numeracy and the development of personal skills equips them well for the next stage of education. Parents find out regularly about their child's progress. The school has rightly identified that the resources for outdoor learning are rather limited and that their use does not link well to what pupils are learning inside the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve further the rate of progress that Years 3 and 4 pupils make in mathematics to at least the good levels of reading and writing.
- Improve the resources for the outside learning area and their use with the children in the Reception class.

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 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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 September 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Cockfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Church Lane, Cockfield,
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP30 0LA

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and join an assembly. I really enjoyed your singing. You are lucky to attend such a happy and friendly school. There are many good things about your school:

- You reach good standards in the assessments in Years 2 and 4.
- You work hard in lessons and behave well.
- You work excellently with local people and help to make the community a happy place to live.
- Your headteacher has really good ideas about ways to improve the school.
- Teaching is good and your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting.
- An excellent partnership is in place between the school and parents.
- Teachers and staff care for you well.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. I hope that you will help teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are:

- improving the progress that you make in Years 3 and 4 in mathematics to at least the good levels of reading and writing;
- improving the equipment for the reception outside area and its use with children.

Keep working hard at Cockfield Church of England VC Primary School.

Jackie Cousins

Lead Inspector