



Ghost Hill First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121006
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291948
Inspection dates 25–26 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. John Messer

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Eastfield
School category	Community		Taverham, Taverham
Age range of pupils	3–8		Norwich, Norfolk NR8 6PJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01603 860334
Number on roll (school)	268	Fax number	01603 869502
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr. Roger Oakes
		Headteacher	Mrs. Frances Rowell
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2000		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–8	25–26 September 2006	291948

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

This first school is slightly larger than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are from White, British families and a very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number of pupils speak languages other than English at home and a small number are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged families. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry to the school 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: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils thrive because their personal development is exceptionally good. They become self-assured learners and are confident beyond their years. They speak sensibly about their work and believe that they learn lots of new things. A pupil in Year 3 explained, 'Actually, I think that we make brilliant progress in everything'. They love school and attendance is excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children settle quickly in the Nursery and make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception year standards are well above average. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school but progress is uneven. In some classes pupils make much faster progress than in others. In national assessments for pupils in Year 2 in 2004 and 2005 results were exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. Provisional data for 2006 shows that standards have remained exceptionally high in mathematics but, although still above average, performance declined in reading and writing. By Year 3 pupils attain standards that are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Teaching and learning are good. There are examples of exceptionally good teaching, where teachers have very high expectations of pupils' ability to learn rapidly and where pupils quickly master new skills, but there are occasions when pupils make less progress because they are not sufficiently challenged. The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched by a range of interesting visitors and educational visits, including a residential visit for pupils in Year 3. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils say that they feel totally safe and secure in school. The leadership and management of the school are good. The school is held in high esteem and parents are very pleased with the education provided for their children. The headteacher's effective leadership ensures that levels of teamwork are high and that there is a shared commitment to improving the school. The school collects a great deal of information about the progress of each pupil. Systems in place in the Foundation Stage show clearly that children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress. However, whilst staff have begun to analyse performance data to show exactly how much progress pupils make and to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses, this work is relatively new and so it will take some years to reveal a complete picture of progress. The school produces a detailed annual improvement plan which helps to guide its work. However, the plan does not concentrate energy and resources in a sufficiently focused way to maximise the impact of new initiatives. The school improvement plan is not linked closely enough to financial planning and the full cost of projects is not totally clear. Nevertheless, the school has made great strides since the last inspection, especially in improving standards in information and communication technology. In this respect, and with regard to pupils' standards and achievements, the school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Thoroughly measure and analyse the progress that pupils make in order to identify where improvements in progress are needed.
- Improve the development planning process so that the school can set tightly focused whole school targets that are fully costed.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and by the end of the Reception year, nearly all have attained all the early learning goals and some are already working on the first levels of the National Curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 to 3 achieve well because the school caters effectively for pupils of all abilities. Faster learners are challenged to reach standards well above what might be expected of them and slower learners are given good support so that they too make good progress. The small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English also make rapid progress and participate fully in class activities. A recent analysis showed that as a result of staff turnover, pupils' achievement in Year 2 was uneven, with some groups making good progress and others just satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 3, most pupils attain standards that are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science because most teachers believe in pupils' ability to reach high standards and plan lessons that help them to achieve well. One boy in Year 3 summed this up when he said, 'They treat us like Year Fives'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Ghost Hill School is a really happy school. Children and adults enjoy each other's company and treat each other with enormous respect. This is the basis for the outstanding progress pupils make in their personal development. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Very good relationships and constant encouragement allow pupils to develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They enjoyed a visit to the mosque and reflect seriously about different cultures and beliefs. They have a fierce sense of justice and fair play. A good personal, social and health education programme teaches children how to stay safe and look after themselves, for example by adopting a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. They develop an impressive range of competencies, including computer skills, which lay secure foundations for adult life and for future economic well-being. The school and class councils help pupils to understand citizenship and their responsibility to others because their views are taken seriously. An outstanding feature was two pupils from 'Daisy class' attending a Governors' meeting to explain what was happening in school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils at the school are confident learners who communicate well. The good quality teaching, which enables them to do this, begins in the Foundation Stage where planning is centred on the needs of individual children of all abilities. Teachers evaluate their work and are always looking for ways to improve. Good planning is a feature of teaching

throughout the school and children are clear about what they are going to learn. Teachers and support staff are hard-working and work well together to make sure that children learn effectively. Children enjoy learning and respond really well when they are challenged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the full range of learners' needs and interests. The school provides a wide range of activities for pupils which make learning exciting. The special events, such as the Multi-cultural Week and Harvest Festival allow the whole school to share experiences and learning. There are good links between the different subjects that enhance understanding. For example, a topic on the Second World War was used effectively to stimulate good writing and drama. There was also a strong link with spiritual development when children visited the local church and were captivated by the War Memorial. The school recognised that its science curriculum did not provide enough challenge. It quickly set out on a course to replace the science curriculum with one that was more demanding. This response is typical of the school's good leadership and management.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. The procedures to ensure that pupils are safe fully meet current requirements. Pupils who find learning hard are supported well and this enables them to become confident learners. Pupils are involved in gauging how much they have learned and whether or not they have mastered new skills. The school is good at listening and responding to pupils' views. The recently introduced school council is already making its voice heard and is making suggestions about how to improve the school environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads a team of teachers and support staff who are all committed to providing pupils with good levels of care, support and guidance and who strive hard to help pupils attain high standards. She enjoys the confidence of parents and the community. Governors provide good support. They keep in touch with school issues and monitor the school's performance well. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate. However, whilst the school assessed its overall effectiveness as 'outstanding', the inspection finds it to be good because new initiatives have yet to have a full impact and the school is still developing systems to measure pupils' progress. Furthermore, the school improvement plan is based on an evaluation of all of the school's most pressing priorities. It includes too many initiatives, rather than concentrating money, effort and resources on one or two major issues that can be fully resolved within a specific amount of time. Nevertheless, teachers, support staff and governors are eager

to improve the school and this wholehearted backing means that the school is well placed to make further improvements.

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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?	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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 September 2006 Dear Children Ghost Hill First School, Eastfield, Taverham, Norwich, Norfolk, NR8 6PJ We enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for being so helpful and for telling us all about the school. We think that there are many good things about the school and some things are outstanding. Your behaviour is excellent and you make lots of good friends. You said that you feel comfortable and safe in school and that the friendly atmosphere helps you with your learning. You love learning new things and you told us that the work you are given is not too hard, not too easy but set at just the right level. You learn quickly and reach very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. You are good at using computers and the presentations that Year 3 are making about Ancient Egypt are stunning. You know a great deal about how the body works and about how to keep fit and healthy. You are kind and thoughtful and you are sensitive to the needs of others. New children settle quickly into the school. You are keen to do well and to succeed. You think hard about things and talk sensibly in class and school council meetings. Above all you have great self-confidence and you love challenging work that really stretches you. We know that your headteacher, staff and governors would like to make your school even more successful. Although many of you said that there is nothing that you could think of to make the school better, we think that there are two main things that could help. Firstly, we think that the school should check even more carefully on how well you are all doing to make absolutely sure that everybody is making as much progress as they possibly can. Secondly, we think that the school should concentrate its efforts on making one or two big improvements rather than trying to do too much at once. I wish you all every success in the future. Yours sincerely John Messer (Lead inspector)