

Hethersett VC Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 121042 |
| Local Authority | Norfolk |
| Inspection number | 339842 |
| Inspection dates | 6–7 July 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Karen Heath |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 242 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dr Fiona Doonan |
| Headteacher | Mr Andrew Whittle |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 December 2006 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school's own monitoring and evaluation and assessment data, as well as school policies and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Eight teachers were observed in 20 lessons. Inspectors met with governors and staff, spoke to pupils, parents and carers and looked at 73 parental questionnaires as well as questionnaires from the staff and pupils. The inspectors also looked at documentation with reference to the safeguarding of pupils.

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

- how the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, is improving pupils' progress
- the effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation to improve the quality of learning for all pupils
- the school's communication with parents and carers about how well pupils are doing.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average size. The pupils are predominantly White British. A lower than average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The numbers of pupils from ethnic minority groups or whose first language is not English are average. There are a high number of pupils with statements of special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has gained the Active Mark and has Healthy Schools status.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the many things they like about school and this enjoyment is reflected in their above average attendance. One parent described the school as 'caring and nurturing'. Inspectors found this to be the case; the school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all its pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported particularly well.

Pupils attain well in both English and mathematics. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because the quality of teaching is good, including in mathematics. Consequently, pupils' progress is accelerated and results show sustained improvement at the end of Key Stage 2. Assessment is used well to plan lessons for different ability groups but marking is inconsistent and pupils do not always have up-to-date targets. While lessons are often well structured, they do not always allow opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work at the end of the session.

The pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles including their tenacity in conserving energy. There is a strong emphasis on physical activity and this is effectively supported by the school's good provision for sporting events including swimming lessons for every pupil. The school has a strong sense of community spirit. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is outstanding. Many pupils not only take on responsibilities within school but initiate improvements; for example, the Playground Pals are effective in preventing bullying and supporting those who have difficulties with friendships. Virtually all pupils say they feel safe in school and inspectors found pupils' behaviour to be good in lessons and during recreation times.

Since its last inspection, the school has done much to improve its communication with parents and carers using a range of methods including text messaging. Parents and carers are sent regular newsletters and receive interim reports about their child's progress and information relating to pupils' academic targets. Inspectors interviewed a group of parents and carers, who said they felt the school kept them well informed; most of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, agree with this.

The governing body plays an active part in the school and rigorously monitors its work. However, this evaluation is not always used to inform the strategic direction of the school. Parents' and carers' views are not sufficiently taken into account in its decision making. While the school has all the necessary policies in place there is not always an accurate record of when they were approved by the governing body.

The leadership team has accurately evaluated its effectiveness and put in place strategies for improvement which has resulted in good and sometimes outstanding outcomes. It has engaged in detailed study and analysis investigating how effectively pupils learn in mathematics lessons. The resulting action from this research has led to a significant improvement in pupils' progress. The complementary strengths of all members of the leadership team and the constant drive for improvements, effectively led by the headteacher, ensure the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use assessment more effectively to ensure pupils continue to make good progress by:
 - ensuring consistency in teachers' marking so that it provides pupils with improvement points
 - consistently setting and reviewing pupils' targets
 - giving pupils the opportunity at the end of lessons to evaluate their own work using success criteria.

- Ensuring that governors further improve their role in the school's strategic planning by:
 - making greater use of their evaluation of the school's effectiveness when deciding future priorities
 - consulting with parents and carers in the school's decision making process
 - formally recording the approval of school policies.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

| |
|---|
| 2 |
|---|

Attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 has been significantly above the national average for two out of the last three years. In 2008, pupils' attainment was similar to age related expectations. Observations in lessons and the school's assessment data also show that pupils' attainment is above average. Progress for all pupils is good and improves as they go through the school. Where the school has put in place intervention programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, these have been particularly effective. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities means these pupils are well supported and have an equal access to the curriculum.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that any problems they experience will be dealt with effectively by the staff. Pupils talked about the worry box which they use if they have a problem. The behaviour of pupils is good within lessons and around the school. They are polite to visitors and caring towards each other. Pupils enjoy the range of activities provided by the school including the variety of clubs, which have a good uptake. Pupils' participation in many of the school's sporting events has helped them to gain an exceptional understanding of how to stay

healthy and of the impact of leading an unhealthy lifestyle.

Pupils are very proud of and committed to their school community and have a significant say in its running. They are involved in many activities beyond their immediate community and have forged useful relationships with businesses, for example, in setting up a school bank. Pupils contribute to the work of the local parish council and participate in a range of events such as the county show. They support international causes through fund raising for charities. This level of involvement means the pupils are keen to come to school and make an outstanding contribution to it and the wider community, as well as developing the appropriate skills for their future well-being.

Pupils from different backgrounds mix well with each other and show a sense of social responsibility. The many cultural and artistic opportunities provided by the school, as well as its links to the church, have developed the pupils' good sense of spirituality. Pupils understand about cultural differences through their experience of others from different ethnic backgrounds. They show a good understanding of religious differences and respect their peers who express their beliefs in different ways.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they respond by engaging keenly in their lessons. Teachers' questioning is effective in challenging the pupils' thinking. There is a good mixture of group and independent working and pupils cooperate well with each other. In a few lessons teachers spent too much time talking and pupils did not have sufficient time for independent, practical activities or opportunities to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

evaluate their own work. There are good systems in place for assessing pupils’ work. However, they are not always effectively used to ensure pupils have targets that are relevant. Marking does not always give pupils a clear indication of what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is effective and includes a wide range of experiences which contribute well to pupils' learning. For example, a visit to the ballet motivated both boys and girls to talk enthusiastically about their experience and then write with insight about the characters in ‘Peter Pan’.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support and it is effective at targeting support for individuals. The school’s monitoring means that the learning needs of pupils are responded to quickly, for example, by providing additional group work or support from a teaching assistant.

The school’s before- and after-school clubs provide good quality care and support within a homely environment. Extra-curricular school activities in term time and holidays are highly valued by pupils and there is a good uptake by all groups.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher demonstrates clear vision and a passion for continuing improvement which benefits the pupils. He is well supported by a dynamic leadership team with a clear understanding of the school’s key issues. Senior staff have carried out a thorough analysis of pupils’ learning in mathematics which has informed the improvement strategies deployed by the school and has resulted in pupils’ improved progress.

The governing body know and understand the school well. Governors monitor aspects of the school’s work and this is well recorded. Governors have interviewed pupils to collect their views on a number of issues. However the outcome of this monitoring does not sufficiently inform the school development plan. Input from parents and carers are not rigorously evaluated to help define the strategic direction of the school.

The school engages in a wide range of partnerships to enhance the curriculum and provide varied opportunities for the pupils, including those who are gifted and talented. Its link with the local university provides students from Europe, who work in the school sharing their culture and language, and this gives pupils a broader understanding of the world.

Equal opportunity is promoted well and any discrimination tackled effectively. Special provision is made for religious worship for some minority ethnic pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to have equal access to the curriculum. The school has carried out an audit of its social, ethnic and religious context and understands that well. As a result, it has devised and implemented an action plan to improve the way it promotes community cohesion. It has not yet evaluated the effectiveness of this work. Safeguarding procedures are robust and all statutory requirements were in place at the time of the inspection. Staff are suitably trained in child protection and thorough risk assessments have been undertaken for activities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers interviewed by the inspection team spoke well of the school and said they feel listened to. They acknowledged the school’s efforts to improve communication. The inspectors consider that the school has made considerable effort in ensuring parents and carers are informed about how they can support their child’s learning. There are regular opportunities to gain information regarding their child’s progress; these include written information and interim reports as well as opportunities for meeting teachers. While the majority of parents and carers feel the school deals well with bad behaviour a few expressed concerns and discussed a particular incident. The school employs a range of strategies to deal with unacceptable behaviour and pupils told the inspection team that these are effective. The inspection team upholds this view; behaviour was observed to be good both in lessons and outside in the playground with appropriate systems in place should they be necessary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hethersett VC Junior 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 242 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 31 | 42 | 35 | 48 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 46 | 63 | 23 | 32 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 22 | 30 | 39 | 53 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 4 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 26 | 36 | 32 | 44 | 9 | 12 | 3 | 4 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 28 | 38 | 38 | 52 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 23 | 32 | 39 | 53 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 4 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 24 | 33 | 45 | 62 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 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) | 29 | 40 | 36 | 49 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 29 | 40 | 33 | 45 | 8 | 11 | 2 | 3 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 22 | 30 | 36 | 49 | 9 | 12 | 4 | 5 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 23 | 32 | 38 | 52 | 9 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 39 | 53 | 26 | 36 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 39 | 53 | 27 | 37 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 |

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 all 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). 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

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|----------------------------|---|
| 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hethersett VC Junior School, Norwich, NR9 3DB

Thank you for making the inspection team feel so welcome. You told me how proud you are of your school. I agree with you that Hethersett is a good school where you feel safe and learn many skills which will prepare you well for later life. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and the confident way you talked to us about all the things that you enjoy. You are very fortunate to have so many opportunities: lessons are made interesting for you and you are taught well.

Even good schools like yours have areas they need to improve. We have asked your headteacher and the teachers to do some things to make your school even better so you continue to make good progress by:

- giving you targets which are up to date and relevant to you
- marking your books in a way which tells you what you need to do to improve
- allowing you time at the end of a lesson to judge for yourselves how well you have done.

We know the governors have spoken to you on a few occasions to find out what you think about school. We would now like them to act on this information by asking your parents and carers what they think too. Then they can help more with the school development plan. We have also reminded governors that they need to record when they have approved all the school's policies.

I hope you will continue to enjoy all the exciting things your school is involved with. You can help the school to improve further by continuing to try your best. I am sure those of you who are about to go to your new high school will have fond memories of Hethersett.

Yours sincerely

Karen Heath
Lead inspector

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