

Creeting St Mary Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124770
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380978
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alastair Rogers
Headteacher	Lyn Spall
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Nick Butt

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed six lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with parents, carers and pupils, two members of the governing body and members of staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including self-evaluation documents, strategic plans and other development plans. The inspector scrutinised 32 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Creeping St Mary is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, and the proportion of such pupils with statements of special educational needs or who receive help from outside the school is high. An increasing number of pupils join the school outside normal times. There are two classes, and both contain pupils from more than one year group. The school has the Eco Green Flag and is accredited with Healthy Schools status.

The school is moving towards taking year groups up to and including Year 6 in September 2013 and is anticipating a major building project to accommodate the additional pupils. In September 2012, Year 4 pupils will stay on to become Year 5 rather than move to middle school. At the time of the inspection Year 4 pupils were on a residential visit.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well in a caring and supportive learning environment. Parents and carers are delighted with all aspects of the school's work. It is not yet outstanding because not enough teaching is outstanding and attainment in writing is not always as strong as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Achievement is good. From starting points generally in line with those expected, pupils reach levels of attainment above national expectations by Year 4. Small year groups mean there is some variation in attainment, but all pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 have good opportunities to develop their factual writing, but fewer chances to write creatively.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons well to meet pupils' different learning needs with a good level of challenge. Just occasionally the pace of learning slips when too much time is spent introducing the lesson, or when pupils' understanding in lessons is not rigorously checked. Marking of pupils' work is generally good, but more helpful in showing them how to improve their writing than their mathematical skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good. They have positive attitudes to learning and pupils of different ages relate well together. Pupils say they feel safe at school, a view strongly endorsed by their parents and carers. Attendance is average and improving rapidly as a result of actions taken by the school.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is highly effective at setting the school's vision and values and providing strong leadership of teaching. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, manage performance well, and are active in securing the longer-term future of the school, for example in gaining full primary school status.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing to mirror that in reading and mathematics by:
 - planning more regular opportunities for pupils to write creatively in Years 2, 3 and 4
 - improving the presentation of pupils' writing.
- Make more teaching outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are conducted at a brisk pace
 - always checking pupils' understanding in lessons and so anticipating where to intervene to move their learning on
 - ensuring that marking always shows pupils clearly how to improve their work, especially in mathematics.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils who join the school partway through the year, or in different year groups, have their needs identified promptly. Good quality support is provided to help them catch up with other pupils in their year groups, as their attainment is often below that of their classmates. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs thrive because they receive individual help tailored very specifically to their requirements from a dedicated team of skilful and experienced teaching assistants. This enables them to make good progress. There are no gaps in attainment between different groups and their peers nationally.

Children join Reception with skills and abilities broadly in line with those expected for their age. They achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the exciting range of stimulating and purposeful activities planned to develop their early literacy and numeracy skills. For example, children took great pride in selling their headteacher ice cream made of the finest ingredients from their ice cream parlour, for which they charged a premium rate. Outcomes are good and children enter Year 1 well equipped for the next stage of learning. In most year groups, including Year 4, attainment overall is above national expectations and rising. Attainment in writing is often above expectations, but fluctuates more in some year groups. Pupils do not always take sufficient pride in the presentation of their work, and have not had sufficient opportunities to develop their creative writing as much as they have factual writing. Progress in reading is good. The sounds that letters make (phonics) are taught systematically so that pupils can decode unfamiliar words and read with increasing fluency and expression as they grow older. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to discuss books they enjoy and use more sophisticated skills such as summarising the story so far and predicting what might happen next. Attainment in reading is

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consequently above average in Year 2 and above national expectations in Year 4.

Pupils are keen to learn, and enter into activities with great enthusiasm. This occurred when pupils in Years 2 and 3 scoured the school grounds for mini-beasts. A pupil was thrilled to unearth a yellow ladybird, something she had been researching earlier in the day. Pupils work with purpose and perseverance, as seen when Year 1 pupils wrote correctly punctuated sentences about the parts of a vegetable that can be eaten. Parents and carers are extremely positive about their children's progress, and all who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they do well at school.

Quality of teaching

Teachers use assessment information well to plan work that is pitched correctly to challenge and engage all groups of pupils. This ensures that they make rapid progress in lessons and find work interesting and satisfying. One pupil said, 'Teachers try to make us do our best and help us a lot.' There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their early literacy skills in Reception and Year 1, so that they are writing complete sentences with increasing sophistication. Teachers build on these in Years 2, 3 and 4. For example, pupils enjoyed finding out about different creatures to assemble 'factfiles'. One pupil called his 'Mini-beasts: the deadly ones'! However, there is not enough emphasis on story-writing and other creative aspects of literacy. The teaching of reading gives pupils the strategies they need to become confident and voracious readers, with many reading regularly at home.

Teachers use questioning well to extend pupils' learning and check their understanding when the class is together, although occasionally this is not rigorous enough to pick up misconceptions when pupils are working independently. Good subject knowledge brings learning to life and enthuses pupils. The older pupils had developed a remarkable understanding about Greek theatre as a result of their teacher's expertise and were able to identify key features of the dramas, as well as acting out scenes from Euripides' tragedy *Electra*. Excellent relationships ensure that learning takes place in a supportive atmosphere of mutual respect. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as they reflect on core values such as those set out in the Olympic ideal, and the deeply-held values of faith that the school instils. Very occasionally the pace of lessons flags if the introduction goes on too long so that pupils do not have enough time for their independent tasks.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well and fully included in learning. They have individual targets that help them to make good progress. Across the school, pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their reading and writing, but marking sometimes is less helpful in mathematics. All parents and carers who responded stated that they believed teaching to be good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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The school's family ethos, where all pupils are known as individuals, makes them feel valued and promotes their good behaviour. Parents and carers speak highly of the conduct of their children. A typical response was, 'We love the atmosphere and how caring the children are about each other.' Older pupils look after the younger ones, and pupils willingly take on responsibilities such as 'eco-warriors', school councillors and junior road safety officers. Pupils say that behaviour is typically good in school and that there is no bullying. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying might take, including name-calling, racist bullying and cyber bullying, and have every confidence in staff to deal with any worries they may have. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is considerate and positive, as they cooperate with one another and with staff. The school can point to marked improvements in the behaviour of individuals since they joined the school because of the good quality care and support they receive.

All the parents and carers who expressed an opinion said that their children are safe at school, a view confirmed by the pupils themselves. Pupils understand clearly how to keep themselves safe and to identify potential risks. The vast majority of pupils attend school punctually. Attendance, though average, is improving rapidly because the school is making abundantly clear to families how important it is that their children do not miss out on their learning.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers are particularly successful at sustaining the school's positive ethos and engaging with parents and carers. Over two thirds of the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and none disagreed with any of the statements about how well the school conducts its work. The school has made good progress since its last inspection in tackling the issues raised then, so that pupils are much more involved in shaping their learning. Good professional development, for example in using and applying mathematics through problem-solving, has resulted in better teaching and attainment that is consistently above national expectations by Year 4. The introduction of philosophy lessons has clarified pupils' thinking and helped them to reflect upon their learning and articulate their views, even when they disagree with each other. Rigorous monitoring, performance management and the tracking of pupils' progress have ensured that all groups of pupils continue to achieve well, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who join the school outside normal times. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school and active in checking its work and communicating with parents and carers. It ensures that pupils are kept safe through robustly implementing all safeguarding arrangements. The school's successful track record gives it a strong capacity for further improvement.

The curriculum provides a good level of enrichment to enhance pupils' experiences through visits and visitors, such as when an archaeologist spent a day showing pupils how people find out about ancient civilisations. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs and participate in extra-curricular activities as a member of Suffolk Children's University. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development well through its sporting, artistic and musical links, as well as through helping pupils to reflect on their learning and the world around them. Equal opportunity is at the heart of all the school does. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated, and all pupils are welcomed into the school, whatever their needs and prior experiences.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Creeting St Mary Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ipswich, IP6 8NF

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently, and for sharing your views with me when I spoke with you and through returning the questionnaires. I agree with you that Creeting St Mary is a good school and has many strengths. Here are some of them.

- You make good progress in your work and do better than most pupils nationally.
- The teaching is good and you find learning enjoyable and interesting.
- You behave well and care for each other considerately.
- There are plenty of clubs and visits for you to enjoy.
- The school cares for you well, especially if you have any worries.
- The headteacher and other leaders do a good job at helping the school to become even better.

In order for the school to improve even more I have asked your headteacher and the teachers to:

- give those of you in Years 2, 3 and 4 more opportunities to write stories and use your imagination
- make sure you present your writing neatly
- keep lessons going at a brisk pace
- check how well you are doing during lessons to make sure you understand your work
- show you how to improve your work in mathematics when they mark your books.

You can all help by keeping your work neat and continuing to do your best.

My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt
Lead inspector

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