

Debden Church of England VC Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115128
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311846
Inspection dates	3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	159
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Mr Matt Hinton
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Gibbons
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 November 2004
School address	Debden Saffron Walden Essex CB11 3LE
Telephone number	01799 540302
Fax number	01799 540845

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	3 July 2008
Inspection number	311846

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: current achievement, particularly in mathematics, the quality of teaching and learning, the care, guidance and support provided and the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils, the staff, some parents and governors, and an analysis of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in the report where appropriate.

Description of the school

Pupils come from the local and surrounding villages and currently more than 50 % come from Carver Barracks. They are from a broad range of social backgrounds and there is a high level of pupil mobility. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and three per cent speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils who find learning more difficult is below average for a school of this size. The attainment of children who start in the Foundation Stage varies from year to year, although it is usually above national expectations for their age. The school has been awarded the Active Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that is valued highly by pupils and their parents, as is reflected in many parents' comments such as 'a great school' and 'The local population are extremely lucky to have a school such as this on their doorstep'. Parents spoken to during the inspection particularly appreciated the excellent care given by staff and the school's Christian ethos that provide a very strong moral grounding. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils look out for each other to ensure that they are happy and enjoying school. This is reflected in the good work of the school council, for example in providing more lunchtime play equipment. Most pupils behave excellently as they are keen to meet the staff's high expectations and gain recognition, for example, through house points. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are managed successfully to minimise disruption. Pupils have enthusiastic attitudes and clearly enjoy school, as shown in their good levels of attendance. They work well together and help each other to improve their work, particularly when improving their writing.

Pupils' achievement is excellent overall because of the consistently high quality teaching, their desire to learn and the increasingly effective support and guidance to improve their work. The headteacher and her staff have a rigorous and consistent focus on maintaining high performance. They are very effective in using assessments to check carefully on the progress of every pupil and target extra support or extension work to ensure that they all continue to achieve well. As a result, Year 6 pupils continually attain standards that are well above the national average. The school's focus on writing has helped pupils attain high standards and the excellent standards in science result from outstanding teaching and good support from members of the local community. A recent dip in pupils' attainment in mathematics in Year 2 is being targeted effectively and standards are rising to above average levels. Those pupils who find learning difficult make excellent progress and most attain nationally expected standards. The very effective use of frequent assessments and daily evaluations of lessons enable staff to identify any areas of under-performance and to refine their teaching to improve them.

The outstanding teaching is a key factor in helping pupils' to achieve so well. The headteacher has very good systems for checking the quality of teaching. She has encouraged staff, especially those with subject responsibilities, to observe each other's lessons and share good practice. As a result, teaching is of a consistently high standard. Teachers plan carefully to match activities to the full range of learning needs. Their excellent partnership with teaching assistants ensures that all pupils are included fully and given very effective support individually or in small groups. This is particularly successful in supporting the high number of pupils who join the school during the year, especially the small number who speak English as an additional language. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to grasp pupils' attention and promote an enjoyment of learning. Their increasingly effective use of peer and self-assessment and improvement targets, particularly in writing, helps pupils to gain a clear insight into how well they are attaining and how they can improve. These procedures are supported well by teacher-pupil conferences and some effective marking to help pupils achieve their learning targets. These systems are not yet as effective in mathematics.

The outstanding headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership. A very effective staff team and an active and influential governing body support her very well. They have developed very effective procedures that carefully check how well the school is doing and set clear priorities for improvement that are rigorously tackled. Governors continually evaluate the progress being made on each priority and take any necessary action to ensure targets are met. The headteacher has used a good range of strategies, such as 'assignment books' and a parents' focus group to encourage a successful partnership with parents that improves their children's learning. She uses assessment data very well to agree challenging targets, with each teacher, for their pupils' achievement by the end of the year. She regularly monitors the progress towards these targets and supports her staff to ensure that all pupils stay on track to achieve them. In this, she is supported extremely well by very effective subject leadership in literacy and numeracy. This provides a strong and consistent focus on pupils' achievement in these key subjects and sustains high standards.

Pupils enjoy the broad range of learning activities, especially the extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors. They particularly enjoy the many sporting activities and their good understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles reflects the school's Active Mark award. The school's increasing use of curriculum topics to integrate subjects and provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT encourages their eagerness to learn. The school works very closely with other local schools and the local community, for example by contributing regularly to the Parish magazine and the 'Carver Barracks News'. Its strong links with the local church are reflected in school assemblies and the frequent visits by pupils to participate in services and display their work. These contribute significantly to the school's Christian, caring and supportive ethos.

The school has made excellent improvement since the last inspection, particularly in increasing pupils' understanding of our multicultural society. The headteacher, her staff and governors have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and what needs improving. This gives them the capacity to maintain the high quality education and standards of attainment.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children settle quickly and happily into the two Reception classes. Effective arrangements introduce them to school life and into a friendly, caring, learning atmosphere. Children benefit greatly from an excellent outdoor area created with the help of locally based Army personnel. They enjoy an interesting, creative and very well organised range of learning activities that includes a very good balance between those that are directed by adults and those of their own choosing. The very good teamwork between the two teachers and teaching assistants ensures that they continuously assess and record how well each child is achieving. They share this information and use it very effectively to inform teaching and to target the progress of each child. The excellent, enthusiastic teaching helps children to achieve outstandingly well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the procedures to help pupils know how to improve their work, particularly in mathematics.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



4 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Debden Church of England VC Primary School, CB11 3LE

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you about what you do in school, looking at your work and watching you learn. You clearly enjoy school and, together with your parents, most of you think that it is an excellent school – I agree.

I was pleased to see how well you get on together. You behave really well and this means that teachers can get on with the job of helping you learn. I really enjoyed visiting the Reception classes and seeing you take part enthusiastically in an excellent range of activities. I would like to say special thanks to the Year 4 pupils I talked to who told me all about life at Debden, particularly as all of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 were away on their trip to Scarborough.

You told me that you learn a lot in school and enjoy your work, especially the good range of school clubs, visits and visitors. I think that your learning is excellent. Your teachers make your lessons interesting and you try hard to do what your teachers ask. You are helpful to each other when suggesting ways to improve your writing. You are keen to achieve your learning targets and this is helping to improve your work, especially your writing. Mrs. Gibbons and all the staff constantly try to help you learn as well as possible. I have asked them to give you more guidance to help you improve your work in mathematics so that it is as good as your writing.

Thank you again for helping me to find out about your school. I hope that you will continue to listen carefully to your teachers and to work hard to achieve your learning targets.

Yours sincerely

Colin Henderson
Lead inspector