

Snettisham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120881
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313777
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Nelson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	122
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr . Hawkins
Headteacher	Ms Louise Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Snettisham King's Lynn Norfolk PE31 7LT
Telephone number	01485541274
Fax number	

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well children are achieving; whether the school meets all the requirements for safeguarding children; and how well the school is managing the recent changes in staff and governors, gathering evidence from observing the work of the school, talking with staff, governors and pupils, analysing the parental questionnaires, and reviewing school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the team found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified or better, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves the village of Snettisham and surrounding areas. It became a primary school in 2004 and has had the full primary age range since 2006. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average. Nearly all the children are of White British heritage and very few are at an early stage in acquiring English. The proportion who need extra help with their learning is above average. The school has a much higher proportion of children with statements of their special educational need than most schools of this size. The children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with knowledge and skills below those expected for their ages. There are 17 children in the EYFS. The school holds awards for the Healthy Schools Initiative, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Silver Artsmark Award and the Active Mark. Recent promotions have led to a substantial turnover of staff including a newly appointed leader for the EYFS and for mathematics. There is currently an acting headteacher pending the new headteacher starting in January.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Children and their parents think, correctly, that this is a good school. Many parents took the time to write to the inspectors to say how pleased they are with the school. One summed up the views of many in writing, 'Snettisham Primary is a wonderful, caring school', while several said how happy their children are here. They recognise that it is much more than just a friendly place. One parent captured the essence of the school in writing: 'We feel that it is a friendly yet professionally led school with a strong commitment to its pupils, parents, guardians and the community'. This comment gets to the heart of the reasons for the school's success, its good leadership and outstanding ethos of care. The school has managed successfully the transition from a lower school to a primary school over recent years. The recent promotion of several staff has meant it has teachers new to their leadership roles, several new governors and with an acting headteacher, and still it thrives. More than one parent wrote to say how impressed they are with the acting headteacher 'Who is doing a great job in continuing the highly effective leadership set by the previous head'. The result of her leadership is that 'The school has been very settled this term which is wonderful for the parents and children', and, 'Despite the recent changes the school retains a fantastic family atmosphere'. That these changes have been managed so smoothly and without detriment to the care and education of the children is testament to the vision and leadership of the acting headteacher. She has ensured that new staff and governors have settled quickly to their new roles and responsibilities and had all the support they need to get to know the school and its routines quickly. Consequently, governance is good. They and the staff have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and what is needed to move it to the next level.

The school's strong commitment to providing high quality care has resulted in children's personal development being outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary so that no time is lost in lessons because children are attentive and keen to learn. This, along with consistently good teaching, helps them to make good progress and achieve well in their learning so that they reach at least average standards by the end of both key stages. The small numbers in each year group lead to some variations in standards in some years and the school is quick to analyse the reason for any dips and to put in place strategies to address them. For example, the results of the national tests for Year 6 in mathematics in 2008 were lower than those in English and science. The school identified weaknesses in children's calculation skills and is addressing them this term. Children thoroughly enjoy the practical activities teachers use to make lessons interesting. For example, in mathematics they love playing number games, or racing to identify times on clock faces, while in English they produced some really high quality lines of poetry to place in a decorated box. Children commented that, 'Teachers make work fun but challenging so that we learn a lot'.

The school is particularly successful in supporting children who need extra help with their learning. More than one parent wrote to inspectors praising the quality of this support and the work of the special educational needs coordinator. The teaching assistants who work with these children provide high quality support to ensure that they meet their targets and get the attention they need without detracting from the work of the rest of the class. Staff work closely with outside agencies as well as with parents to ensure that all children get the levels of support they need to thrive in school. Several parents commented favourably on how approachable staff are if they have concerns. One summed this up in writing: 'Staff are approachable and have dealt with any problems and concerns my children have, with care and consideration'.

As well as providing good support for children's learning so that they achieve well, the staff encourage them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make an effective contribution to their community. The school council is proud of having initiated improvements like the shelters in the playground, for instance, and of having been involved in the selection of the new headteacher. Very good links with organisations in the village and surrounding areas give the children an excellent understanding of their local community and their place in it. They speak proudly of having raised money for a charity providing riding for people with disabilities, and links with a village in Kenya help to bring a global dimension to their understanding of community. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life. The school does an excellent job in helping children to appreciate potential dangers they might face. They are very aware of issues like road safety while walking or cycling and of 'stranger danger'. They are confident that they are extremely safe and well looked after in school and it meets all the government requirements for ensuring children's safety and well-being. One or two parents expressed some concerns about supervision in the playground which the inspectors considered and found the school has addressed appropriately. Above average attendance is another indicator of how much children like school. They thoroughly enjoy the good range of activities teachers give them in lessons and particularly like the special enrichment activities, trips to places of interest and after school clubs. This is a good school that is in a period of transition and well placed to continue improving in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Very close liaison with the neighbouring playgroup and with parents ensures that children settle quickly and smoothly into EYFS routines. They are happy, relaxed and enjoy the activities that staff give them because these are well matched to their individual needs. At times, activities are directed too much by adults and do not give children enough opportunity to make their own choices. All the required welfare requirements are fully in place and parents appreciate the steps staff take to deal with any upsets or worries they or their children have. As a result of good teaching and activities that cover all the required areas of learning, children make good progress with a good proportion reaching the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Although the EYFS has an outside area for the sole use of these children, it is not as inspiring or used as well as it might be and there is a lack of opportunity at times for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas. The new EYFS leader has made a good start to her role and is fully committed to the continual improvement of the EYFS.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure effective implementation of the new EYFS requirements including enhancing the outside area to make it usable in all weathers and having more child initiated activities
- Check regularly that strategies the school has introduced to improve children's calculation skills are accelerating their progress in mathematics.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Snettisham Primary School, Snettisham, PE31 7LT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and watching you at work and play. This is the letter I promised to send you about what we found out about your school.

We think that yours is a good school which is what you and your parents told us. You work very hard so that you make good progress in your learning. You do a bit better in English than in mathematics and your teachers are trying to help you to get better at your number work. You can help by trying hard and continuing to enjoy the number games that help you to learn.

The staff look after you exceptionally well so you feel very safe and well cared for in school. You told us there is no bullying and we thought your behaviour was excellent. You told us lessons are enjoyable but challenging and we agree with you. As you know, some teachers, including the head, left the school last school year and some new ones came to teach you. Ms Jackson is doing a super job as acting headteacher this term and helping the new people to settle into their jobs.

Children settle quickly into school when they start in Reception and they make good progress. We have asked the school to make their outside area more interesting for them and to make it so it can be used in all weathers.

We are sure that your school will go from strength to strength and you can play your part by continuing to behave as excellently as you do now and by working as hard in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Ian Nelson

Lead inspector