

North Somercotes CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120692
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358820
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Donna Greenard
Headteacher	Mark Gallacher
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eight teachers and saw 15 lessons. Inspectors observed a school assembly and held discussions with staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body, including the Chair. They looked at pupils' books and viewed a wide range of documentation including school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 97 parents and carers, 71 pupils and three members of staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is the school able to demonstrate that all pupils make adequate progress?
- How well do teachers use assessment information to plan learning tasks that challenge and extend pupils of all abilities?
- Is the school's work to develop a topic-based curriculum having an impact on outcomes?
- Do the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans have sufficient rigour to accelerate progress across the school?

Information about the school

This is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Although a few pupils speak English as an additional language, none are in the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, while the proportion with a statement of special educational need is above average. During the autumn term both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher were absent from the school. During this period an interim headteacher worked with the school for a seven-week period. From January 2011, a full-time interim headteacher has been deployed to the school by the local authority. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed and will take up the post in April 2011.

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: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievements, particularly in mathematics. North Somercotes Primary School has declined in its effectiveness since the last inspection in 2007 and has been slow to tackle the issues raised by that inspection.

The school's assessments and pupils' workbooks show that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is on course to be closer to average at the end of the current academic year than in 2010. Pupils' progress in English is improving because staff are successfully focusing on the development of reading and writing skills. However, pupils in some year groups continue to make inadequate progress because of weaknesses in teaching. Progress in mathematics, in particular, is uneven across the school. There are examples of good lessons, where pupils progress well, because teachers use assessment information to make sure that they are actively engaged in well-planned learning activities. This is not always the case and it means pupils do not make as much progress as they should. The local authority has provided training for teachers in assessing pupils' understanding and is planning future work. As a result, assessment has improved and pupils are set suitably challenging targets. In some lessons, introductory and other teacher-led activities are too long and lack pace. Teaching assistants are not deployed well enough to support pupils' learning at these times. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the effective support they receive in small groups and individual sessions.

Staff have successfully maintained a school with a welcoming ethos where pupils feel safe. Most pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They are considerate to one another and are keen to take on responsibilities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils understand how to keep themselves fit and healthy. While the curriculum is satisfactory, it is not focused enough on pupils' needs and interests and has comparatively few opportunities for enrichment or to develop creativity. The school's links with the local community are based on a firm understanding of its context. As a result, community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily on a local level. However, the curriculum is less effective in promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures within and beyond the United Kingdom.

The interim headteachers, with good support from the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, have brought stability to the school after an extremely unsettled period. With the effective support of the local authority, they have evaluated the school's performance and identified the correct priorities for improvement. However, the monitoring of teaching and

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learning focuses too much on adults' actions and not enough on the progress pupils are making. Because of recent staffing changes, subject responsibilities have yet to be allocated. The school benefits from the full support of the governing body. However, the governing body recognises that it has not been sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance to offer sufficient challenge to leaders. It is now fully aware of its responsibilities and members are keen to undergo training to strengthen this aspect of their work. The drive for improvement is underpinned by a well-structured strategic plan that clearly prioritises the raising of attainment and identifies the actions needed to achieve this objective. The success of measures to raise attainment in English, together with the recent improvements in assessment and target setting, and the determination of all to raise standards, gives the school satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching good or better in order to raise attainment and increase the rate at which pupils make progress in their learning, especially in mathematics , by ensuring that:
 - full use is made of assessment information to plan learning tasks that are appropriately challenging for pupils of all ability levels
 - introductions to lessons and other teacher-led activities are not too long and the best use is made of teaching assistants.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their mathematical skills
 - developing more cross-curricular links to make learning more relevant to pupils' needs and interests
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their creative talents
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of cultural diversity.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - monitoring and evaluation are clearly focused on pupils' learning and the impact of strategies to raise attainment
 - subject coordinators identify what individual teachers need to do to make sure that pupils' progress is consistently good
 - the governing body has the skills and information needed to offer challenge and support in equal measure.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Over recent years, pupils have made insufficient progress and achievement is therefore inadequate. Most children's skills and experiences are consistent with those expected for their age when they start in the Nursery. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most are attaining age-related expectations by the time they

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enter Year 1. The achievement of the few pupils who speak English as an additional language is comparable to their classmates. Lesson observations conducted during the inspection, records of progress and scrutiny of work books indicate that pupils' learning is beginning to improve. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average, but better in English than in mathematics. This is because learning activities are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs in mathematics. Pupils enjoy and achieve well when lessons are stimulating and engaging. In these lessons they also show good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. This was exemplified in an English lesson in Year 6, where pupils made good progress in the use of language. In this lesson, resources were used effectively to inspire their imaginations, but this is not the case in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because assessment information is used well to target support effectively.

Pupils are aware of how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or during their journeys to and from school. They understand the importance of exercise and a balanced diet to their healthy development. The school council provides a forum for pupils' views and pupils contribute to the school in other ways, for example, by acting as buddies and helping to tidy up. Cultural development is only satisfactory because pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about cultures and communities other than their own. Pupils' improved attainment in literacy, satisfactory social development, average attendance and appropriate punctuality mean they are adequately prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory and it is improving. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, but progress is not yet adequate because of the ground to be made up. Most lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. In the best lessons, assessment information is used well to guide the planning of learning tasks and pupils are expected to work independently, challenging themselves and others as they talk things through. This was seen in a Year 5 science lesson where pupils made good progress in understanding condensation and the water cycle. However, in another lessons pupils are given work that is too easy, especially in mathematics, and this slows their progress. In many lessons, teachers take too much time introducing learning, which gives pupils too little time to practise, extend and apply their learning and skills. This also limits the work of teaching assistants, who spend too much time listening to the teacher and not enough on supporting learning.

The curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning experiences. In some year groups appropriate links are beginning to be made between subjects, but this development is at an early stage and not seen in all year groups. In particular, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. Provision for information and communication technology and science is enhanced through links with the local secondary school. Pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

The school keeps pupils safe and provides a satisfactory level of support and advice. While support in lessons for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is generally effective, in some instances the support for those who find it difficult to maintain consistently good behaviour is less effective. Action is being taken to improve this. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is good. Attendance is improving because more rigorous procedures to support regular attendance and reduce the number of persistent absentees have been introduced.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership is satisfactory and improving. The interim headteachers and other senior leaders are guiding the school through a challenging period in which there has been significant change. However, the monitoring of provision by middle leaders is not developed well enough to sharpen the work of teachers and so quicken pupils' progress. The school benefits from the support of the governing body. However, the governing body

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been too reliant on reports from the headteacher and not sufficiently involved in gathering first-hand information to challenge and support school improvement.

Arrangements are secure for safeguarding the welfare of pupils and for making sure that those working with them are properly vetted. Responsibilities are clear, so that the school provides a safe environment for all. The procedures meet statutory requirements. Appropriate measures are in place to tackle any form of discrimination. Improved tracking systems, the rise in attainment in English and the satisfactory progress being made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities show that the school is now satisfactorily promoting equality of opportunity. The school is mindful of the community it serves and recognises, rightly, the lack of links to provide national and global perspectives, and open pupils' minds to the range and diversity of culture in the United Kingdom and beyond.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly because there is a warm and welcoming environment where they feel safe and secure. Children work well together in the Nursery and the Reception class. They behave sensibly and share resources cooperatively. While progress is satisfactory overall, displays in the Nursery are of good quality and the curriculum in this part of the school provides wider and more interesting opportunities for learning than in Reception. The school has drawn well on support from the local authority in helping to raise standards and the quality of the learning environment. By the end of the Reception year attainment is average overall; in the most recent assessments, children have exceeded the levels expected for their age in their personal, social and emotional development.

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff work closely with parents and carers. The tracking of each child's progress has improved in the Reception class and is to be

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extended to the Nursery. Leaders recognise the need to include 'next steps' in Learning Journals, so that parents and carers are made aware of what they can do to help their children to make good progress in their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

There was an above average rate of response to the parents' and carers' questionnaire. Most agree that their children are kept safe, that the school helps children to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to enjoy school. These positive views were supported by inspection findings. A small minority of respondents disagreed that the school is led and managed well, that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively and that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that after a period of significant disruption leadership and management are now satisfactory. Inspectors also found that, while behaviour of the overwhelming majority of pupils is at least satisfactory and often good, there are instances when the management of the very few pupils who find it difficult to maintain consistently good behaviour is less effective. A few parents and carers expressed concerns regarding their children's progress or reported that they did not feel well informed about the progress which their children make. A few also felt that the school did not help them to support their children's learning. Inspectors found that pupils are not making enough progress. They also found that parents and carers are invited to discuss their children's progress. Teachers and the headteacher make themselves available to parents and carers so that any concerns or suggestions can be dealt with promptly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Somercotes CofE Primary 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 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 166 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	53	38	39	4	4	3	3
The school keeps my child safe	52	54	40	41	3	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	40	43	44	13	13	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	35	47	48	12	12	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	43	44	41	42	9	9	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	36	47	48	9	9	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	42	51	53	4	4	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)	33	34	44	45	4	4	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	33	50	52	8	8	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	29	33	34	11	11	7	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	26	48	49	14	14	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	27	28	32	33	16	16	11	11
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	45	39	40	10	10	2	2

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

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.



21 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Somercotes CofE Primary School, Louth, LN11 7QB

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We were impressed by your manners and kindness. Our particular thanks to those of you who talked to us and shared your thoughts and ideas about school. Although most of the things about the school are satisfactory, we have given it a notice to improve. This is because your progress in learning has been too slow over the last few years. The school is not as effective as it should be. This means that inspectors will return in a few months to check that things are improving.

Most of you enjoy school, listen to your teachers and are willing to work hard. This is a considerable help to your teachers because it allows them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. You make more progress in some lessons than others, so we have asked your teachers to make sure that you are challenged in all lessons to make the best possible progress. We have also asked that you are given more opportunities to develop your mathematical skills. Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work. They correct any mistakes and make clear what you have to do to improve. All of you can help yourselves to make more progress by trying hard to follow the advice you are given. We have asked the school to make more links between subjects and to help you to develop your creative talents. We have also asked that you have more opportunities to learn about the customs and beliefs of a wide range of people.

Your headteacher, all the staff and governors are determined to make the school better. To help this we have asked senior staff to check more closely on the progress you are making in your lessons and to make sure that governors are more closely involved in checking the school's work.

We think that everyone at North Somercotes can work together to do these things. You can play your part by working really hard in all your lessons.

Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your success.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas

Lead Inspector

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