

St Botolph's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	132251
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	381462
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Sue Hall

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 of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Benham
Headteacher	Deborah Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2008
School address	Rookery Avenue Sleaford NG34 7FE
Telephone number	01529 302698
Fax number	01529 306868
Email address	enquires@quarrington.lincs.sch.uk

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sue Hall	Additional Inspector
Joanne Sanchez-Thompson	Additional Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 15 teachers in 24 lessons and parts of several guided group-reading sessions. Inspectors also heard a sample of 19 pupils of mixed abilities from Year 2 and Year 6 read individually. The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, with senior leaders and with representatives of the governing body. They also spoke informally to a small number of parents and carers. Inspectors looked at data about achievement across the school and examined samples of pupils' recent work. They scrutinised documents, including self-evaluation information, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and a sample of whole-school policies. They examined evidence regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors analysed 169 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 26 from members of staff and 100 from pupils.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British background and very few speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower than seen in many schools, as is the percentage of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school exceeded the floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment set by the government, last year. The breakfast and after-school club is managed by the school and included in this inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up substantive posts during this school year and were in acting posts during the previous year. The school holds Healthy Schools, ICT mark (Information and Communication Technology) and Activemark awards.

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. It is not yet outstanding because standards in mathematics are not as high as they could be and the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Key to the considerable improvement made during this year has been the excellent vision and determined drive for improvement demonstrated by the headteacher. This is motivating the whole school community to do even better.
- The achievement of pupils is good. Since the previous inspection there had been a dip in the standards achieved but in the current year the pace of progress has improved. When pupils leave the school standards are above average, though fewer reach the higher levels than seen nationally in mathematics. Mental mathematics skills are not particularly speedy and this impacts on pupils' confidence in solving problems.
- The quality of teaching is good, particularly for the younger and oldest pupils, promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Staff offer lots of praise and support which encourages pupils to try hard. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are good and have led to recent improvements, although there is still some inconsistency. This is partly because the planning of lessons does not always ensure clarity in what the pupils are to learn or provide a high enough level of challenge for those of different abilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and often of a high standard. They get on well with their peers and adults and know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is very accurate and the school has a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders are starting to develop their roles in working with colleagues to ensure greater consistency and embed recent improvements. There is good capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standards achieved in mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils develop the ability to carry out mental mathematics calculations speedily and accurately
 - building pupils' confidence in solving mathematical problems.

- Develop greater consistency in the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that the planning of lessons clearly identifies exactly what the pupils are to learn and offers the best level of challenge for all ability groups and particularly the higher attainers
 - enabling subject leaders and other skilled staff to spread best practice by working closely with colleagues to support further improvement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Reception classes with skills which are largely in line with expectations for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make good and sometimes outstanding progress, particularly in their personal development and their ability to communicate with others. Children become very enthusiastic young learners, thanks to very interesting activities, well established routines and high expectations of what they can do.

Data indicate that standards in Year 6 have dipped in the last two years from being significantly above average. This has largely been because fewer pupils achieved the higher levels than previously including in mathematics. Lesson observations and samples of pupils' recent work show this decline has been halted and standards are now above average in all subjects. More pupils are now achieving the higher levels in their reading and writing. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

In Years 1 to 6 pupils make good overall progress. Better progress is made in Year 1 and Year 6 than in some other year groups, especially in Key Stage 2. Standards in reading at the end of Year 2 are above average and pupils are well supported in their reading at home. Across the school most read well and by Year 6 many do so with real fluency and obvious enjoyment. Many also write well, and this was illustrated when pupils made outstanding progress in Year 6 learning how to 'read between the lines' and interpret meaning. Because pupils were really interested in watching the video of their drama performance of the previous day, they animatedly developed their ideas of what motivated Dad to 'go for gold' in his quest for Olympic glory. Standards in mathematics are just above national averages, but not all pupils have speedy mental mathematics skills and some of their calculations are slow, which impacts on their confidence in solving mathematical problems, particularly at the higher levels.

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Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and the small number speaking English as an additional language achieve well, because their individual needs are recognised and the programme of support for them is well-tailored to their specific needs. This is effectively narrowing the attainment gap between the lowest attaining pupils and others. Parents and carers are right to believe that their children achieve well.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching, whilst overall good, varies from outstanding to satisfactory. All staff have strong working relationships with pupils and offer them lots of encouragement in their work. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to work with a partner or in groups which supports their moral and social development well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, particularly those with complex difficulties, are well supported in their learning through well-targeted action. Pupils, parents and carers rightly believe that teaching is usually good.

In Reception the staff have established excellent early morning routines. The children enter very happily and without prompting immediately get out their white boards and with very good levels of concentration start to copy frequently used words. The more able then put these words into a sentence while the teacher completes registration in Spanish.

Across the school staff use interactive whiteboards well to provide background information or demonstrate how to work things out. The teaching of reading is effective, with a good focus on letters and the sounds they make. Teachers use a range of strategies to interest and motivate pupils. This was well illustrated in Year 1 where the pupils made excellent progress in writing exciting adjectives in their sentences related to the deep sea. 'Feely bags' were used well to focus on their senses and teachers' questioning checked understanding and extended their thinking. This enabled them to write, 'This spiky seahorse is long and curly'.

Staff plan in year group teams, sometimes with one preparing numeracy activities and the other literacy tasks. There is, however, some difference in the quality of this planning, and occasionally it is not clear enough exactly what the pupils are to learn and how tasks provide a sufficient level of challenge for the more able pupils. Occasionally some staff do not identify well enough what resources will support pupils' learning. This results in, for example, some pupils having to record their ideas about shapes without actually having any to hand so that they can check how many faces, edges or vertices there are.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The typical behaviour of pupils over time is good. They are polite and friendly to each other and to adults. This is clear from the way in which they move around the school quietly and hold doors for others, which is an established practice. Pupils are

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welcoming to new arrivals and polite to all. This was illustrated by one saying, 'Thank you for your time,' when talking to a visitor. Pupils' excellent behaviour during acts of collective worship shows their self-discipline and sense of occasion.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Most try hard with their work and present this neatly, although books in some Key Stage 2 classes are untidy. Most pupils join in discussions in class and volunteer their ideas in question sessions. However, a few pupils, and especially some older girls, do not try hard to contribute, and this does not improve their ability to solve problems in mathematics.

Attendance is above average. Several parents and carers are pleased that despite the size of the school, there is a clear feeling of being a 'family' and their children are well known to the adults around them. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe. This is reflected in their sensible play and their understanding of what bullying is. Most know what constitutes cyber-bullying and the school recognises the need to revisit such topics regularly. While a few parents have concerns regarding behaviour, particularly in one year group, discussions with pupils and staff show that the school carefully monitors and deals with any situations that arise. Most pupils believe that others behave well.

The before- and after-school club provides good care for pupils and keeps them safe. They enjoy attending the sessions and the range of activities, including playing chess, using the library and producing their own Olympic torches.

Leadership and management

The new headteacher is providing very effective leadership following a period of uncertainty and temporary roles. Her unfailingly enthusiastic approach, coupled with a quiet but clearly transmitted determination that things will continually improve, is already noted by staff, parents and carers.

Numerous changes and adaptations to procedures have been made during the last year, with a particular sharpening of the focus on self-evaluation. This is entirely accurate, giving senior leaders a very clear view of current provision. Better assessment routines and use of the information available has arrested the dip in standards and improved the quality of teaching. Professional development and performance management activities have been linked to school priorities, particularly in literacy. Subject leader roles have recently been reviewed with greater responsibility devolved for monitoring and evaluation. However, these roles are new and while some very skilled staff have the opportunity to work with colleagues, several activities are at an early stage of development. Governors are very supportive of the school and are working to improve their effectiveness in holding the school to account.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the different needs of pupils well. With close links to the church and regular visits by the vicar, as Chair of the Governing Body, the school promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

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cultural development well. Equality of opportunity is central to its ethos and discrimination is tackled effectively. The requirements to safeguard the pupils meet requirements and the attractive working environment is secure.

The school does much to inform and involve parents and carers in the life of the school, leading several to speak with great warmth about what the school does to support their child's additional needs. This is summarised by one who commented, 'When my child comes home jumping up and down, bellowing "I love my school" I think that's saying something! I would recommend this school to anyone in a heartbeat'.

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.



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Botolph's CofE Primary School, Sleaford, NG34 7FE

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to your ideas, especially when chatting to groups of you, hearing readers and looking at your questionnaires. We think your school is a happy place to be and that you are very lucky to work in such a stimulating environment. I particularly enjoyed watching what the children in Reception were doing and how hard they tried to produce sentences when working independently. I also liked watching the 'Show Choir'. I thought your singing was really enjoyable.

The school provides you with a good education. These are the things that it does particularly well.

- Your headteacher has made some really important changes this year and ensures that everyone knows what works well and what needs improving.
- Your behaviour is good and sometimes excellent. You get on very well together, know how to keep safe and most of you try hard to improve.
- The standards you reach in your work are above average, especially in reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching is good especially for the younger and oldest ones.

These are the things we have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- Help you to improve your mental mathematics skills so that you become quicker in your calculations and more confident in solving problems so that you can achieve the higher levels in your work.
- Ensure that all staff plan activities really carefully so that work is just hard enough for you all, and that teachers share their ideas more so that everything keeps improving.

You could also help your school by trying hard to always join in discussions.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall
Lead Inspector

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