

Clarborough Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122628
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number	292463
Inspection date	17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr James Hunt-shaw
Headteacher	Mrs Anna Sewell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Clarborough Retford Nottinghamshire DN22 9NA
Telephone number	01777 703352
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school, serves the village of Clarborough and outlying communities near to Retford. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. Children's attainments on entry to the school are currently similar to those normally expected of four year olds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average overall but is high in some year groups. The degree of hardship experienced by some families is not accurately reflected in the take-up of free school meals. The school's poor and deteriorating premises continue to have a negative impact on some areas of pupils' education but there are plans for a new school to be built in 2007/08.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Clarborough Primary is a good school. The governing body's decisive action to strengthen the senior leadership team is now paying off. The headteacher, with strong support from her deputy and governors, has introduced rigorous procedures for evaluating and improving the work of the school. As a result, teaching and learning are better than they were and high standards are being maintained. The headteacher is aiming for excellence when the new school opens but is already achieving it in some areas. The school provides good value for money.

Children get off to a good start in Reception and achieve well throughout Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Standards begin to rise above the average by the time children transfer to Year 1 and are firmly so by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, academic standards are high. They are significantly higher than those in schools nationally, because many pupils exceed the expected standards for their age, with the most able pupils often working at levels more typical of 12 or 13 year olds. Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and so set targets that are challenging enough to move pupils on. They also teach pupils to be effective learners. This is time well spent because of the very positive impact that it has on pupils' learning behaviour, exemplified by the relaxed, yet very purposeful, working atmosphere throughout the school. Another important factor in the raising of achievement has been the introduction of very specific targets, which ensure that pupils really understand the small steps that they need to make in order to reach the next level. Teachers have begun to make specific provision for pupils who are exceptionally able. However, this approach is not yet consistently evident in all lessons, nor does it extend to all subjects. The school rightly regards this as an area for development.

The curriculum is good because it embodies systematic approaches to pupils' academic and personal development. The main strength of current provision is the outstanding range and quality of enrichment activities which, along with excellent standards of care, guidance and support, result in good levels of personal development and well-being and do much to promote safe, healthy lifestyles and to increase pupils' enjoyment in learning.

The school works exceptionally well with others for the benefit of its pupils, especially those who are in any way vulnerable. Consequently, most parents value and support the school. As one parent said, 'My son hasn't just learnt things, he has learnt to enjoy learning things.' The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and her deputy has been the driving force behind the school's good record of improvement since its last inspection. It has also built the school's good capacity to improve further. The nature of the school's sites and accommodation still remains a serious barrier to improving provision for outdoor learning and physical education. However, the school has done all that it reasonably can and so current arrangements are satisfactory, pending the opening of the new school. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are now exceptionally rigorous, yet entirely supportive. As such, they effectively underpin staff development and school improvement.

Subject leaders contribute satisfactorily to the school's comprehensive planning for school improvement but there is scope for them to have a more effective role in the monitoring of standards and quality. Because school self-evaluation is accurate, staff and governors share an understanding of areas for improvement, but planning would be more effective if the school improvement plan had a clearer focus on key priorities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen provision for those pupils who are exceptionally able.
- Give subject leaders a more significant role in monitoring standards and quality.
- Ensure that the school improvement plan clearly identifies the school's key priorities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is in line with that normally expected of four year olds. The school's flexible and well integrated approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 gives pupils a good start to their education. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well. Consequently, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and significantly so in all core subjects by the end of Year 6. The 2006 assessment data indicated that pupils' achievements in Key Stage 2 were satisfactory rather than good, even though a high proportion of pupils attained the above average standard. This was because, a small, but significant number of pupils actually progressed beyond the levels normally seen in primary schools to work at a level more typical of 12 and 13 year olds. This level of performance was not registered by the statutory tests for 11 year olds and so the school's results did not accurately reflect this year group's good overall achievement. Furthermore, the school's detailed and thorough monitoring of pupil's progress shows that, throughout school, more and more are exceeding normally expected rates of progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is in line with the national average and would be higher but for holidays taken in term time. Pupils say that they enjoy school 'because pupils and staff are kind to one another'. They get along extremely well with staff and fellow pupils and most behave well in lessons and around school. By the time that they leave, most are mature and confident. As a result, they are well-prepared for secondary education and the world of work. Their work on safe and healthy lifestyles is also having a good impact, for example on the contents of pupils' lunch boxes and on the up-take of extra-curricular sport. The school's impressive array of trophies testifies to pupils' success in this respect. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is good. The school and class councils give them a real voice in school life. The council is proud to have brought pupils' views to the planning for the new school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respond to things of beauty, have insights into human emotions and act on an understanding of what is right. This, along with their work on an Action Aid in Africa project, prepares them well for life in a diverse society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers make good use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress and to inform the targets that they set for them. Teachers' expectations are, in most respects, suitably high. The majority of pupils' targets are challenging and, because

lesson planning is geared to enabling pupils to meet their targets, these are central to most pupils' good progress. However, although teachers have begun to introduce activities for pupils who are exceptionally able, these are not yet evident in enough lessons. Teaching assistants give effective support to all pupils, but especially to those who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties or disabilities. Teaching is most effective, when teachers and learners contribute to lessons equally. This is often the case because of the consistent approach that all teachers bring to ensuring that pupils understand their targets and how to learn more effectively. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour well, though, at times, the behaviour of a small number of pupils affects their own and others' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. There is a good emphasis on promoting literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills throughout the curriculum. Where cross-curricular links are developing, they make pupils' learning in other subjects more relevant and appealing. However, the school has yet to extend this approach across the curriculum. A strength of current arrangements is the systematic provision for personal, social and health education. This promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, has a positive impact on the choices that pupils make and has helped them to gain the Healthy Schools Gold Award. The school enriches its basic curriculum with an excellent range of visits, visitors and special events, which add much to pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils recall with warmth and enthusiasm their outdoor activities at Perlethorpe, Viking visitors and the fun they had on Kebab Day!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Standards of care, guidance and support are outstanding. There are exceptionally thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Checks on the suitability of staff and procedures for child protection are rigorous and fully meet current requirements. Governors ensure that there is prompt action to minimise potential risks to pupils or staff. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem because teachers and supervisory staff attend to their needs and readily give guidance in matters of personal development.

Pupils say that bullying is rare and that staff deal quickly and effectively with any incidents that occur. Staff set targets to guide the learning of all pupils and, through constructive marking and dialogue, ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work. Teaching assistants give sensitive support, particularly to those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, which enables many of these pupils to progress at a similar rate to most others.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an excellent leader, whose passion for the school engages all who work there. Her vision, along with her rigorous monitoring, has been central to building a consistency of expectation and approach that adds considerably to the quality of teaching and learning. She motivates staff by giving them a real part to play in improving the school. The deputy headteacher provides strong support. Together, they have

brought rigor and accuracy to school self-evaluation, although there is still scope to refine school improvement planning so that it focuses more closely on the school's key priorities. Nevertheless, the direction that they provide gives the school a good capacity for further improvement. The school is beginning to promote the leadership potential of other staff by developing their subject leader responsibilities. However, this work has yet to impact fully on standards and quality, because subject leaders do not have a regular role in monitoring standards and quality. Governors support the school effectively. They gather plenty of first-hand information and are very good at holding the school to account for what it achieves.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 the 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

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.

Annex A

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Clarborough Primary School, Retford, DN22 9NA

You may remember that I visited your school a little while ago. Thank you for making me so welcome and for taking time to talk to me and to answer my questions. I particularly enjoyed speaking with the school council. You are right to be proud of how much school councillors and other pupils do to make your school even better. I thought that you would like to hear what I found out, because I now know that there are many really good things happening in your school.

- Almost all of you make good progress in English, mathematics and science and overall standards are high.
- You enjoy school because teachers, visitors, educational visits and special events make learning interesting and very enjoyable.
- You all get on exceptionally well together and almost all of you behave well, although a few of you could try even harder with your behaviour.
- Your teachers and other adults help you when you have problems, make sure that you are safe and give you really good advice about your work.
- Mrs Sewell, the staff, governors and pupils work hard to improve the school.

Because Mrs Sewell, quite rightly, wants everything to be perfect, there will always be something that she wants to do a little bit better. Therefore, I only have three things to ask the school to do.

- I would like the staff to press on with their ideas for providing work that brings the very best out of the school's most able learners.
- I have asked to make sure that all staff get regular opportunities to check on how well you are all doing in the subjects that interest them.
- Finally, I have asked the governors to make sure that any plans for making the school even better show exactly what the most important jobs will be.

I hope that you will all continue to be happy and to do well at Clarborough Primary School and that those who are still there enjoy your wonderful new school.

Best wishes

Glynn Storer (Lead Inspector)