

The Tydd St Mary C of E Primary

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 120614 |
| Local Authority | LINCOLNSHIRE LA |
| Inspection number | 313695 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 January 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Rajinder Harrison |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 85 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ms Jodi Hammond |
| Headteacher | Mrs Ann Desborough |
| Date of previous school inspection | 31 March 2003 |
| School address | Churchway Tydd St Mary Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 5QY |
| Telephone number | 01945 420269 |
| Fax number | 01945 420269 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is small primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils from families recently arrived from Eastern Europe. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. A high number of pupils transfer into the school in Key Stage 2. Most children start school with overall knowledge and skills that are below the levels expected.

The school has faced many staffing changes since the last inspection, particularly in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's leadership is accurate in its assessment that this is a satisfactory school and that pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are happy at school, form good relationships, show kindness to others, take on responsibilities enthusiastically and trust the adults that work with them. Pupils understand well the importance of staying fit and healthy and enjoy the many clubs and events the school organises. Most parents have positive views about the school.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are a little below the expected levels. Their emotional and social development and communication skills are particularly weak. These areas are given greater attention and as a result, children generally achieve well. At the end of the Foundation Stage, while literacy and some aspects of their numeracy skills remain below average, most children attain the expected levels in most of the other areas. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those who join in Key Stage 2, make satisfactory progress and attain average standards. Although the school tracks pupils' long term progress carefully and identifies those who need additional help, outcomes of day-to-day assessments are not always used well enough by teachers to match work set in lessons closely to pupils' needs; helping them to do their very best. This is particularly noticeable for those pupils who are more able. Nevertheless, pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the help they need and make progress which is comparable to their peers. Teaching is satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teachers challenge pupils well through good discussions and pupils enjoy learning. In other lessons tasks are too easy for pupils and while they are cooperative they do not always learn enough. Overall the curriculum is satisfactory. Many extra-curricular activities successfully enhance pupils' learning. Pastoral care is good and academic guidance is sound. Teachers set pupils targets but do not involve them in this process nor do teachers provide them with enough guidance to help them understand when these targets have been achieved.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Despite high turnover of staff, the headteacher has ensured pupils' satisfactory progress through careful monitoring of teaching and learning and providing the school with clear guidance regarding key areas for development. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. All subject leaders are relatively new to their roles and their work to improve the school's performance is not yet reflected in standards attained by pupils. While leaders know the school priorities for development, there is scope for key staff to support the headteacher more in monitoring implementation of agreed actions and evaluating their impact on outcomes for pupils. A recent focus on developing pupils' writing led to higher results in 2007 and pupils are now working at average levels. Gains made in literacy and improvements in mathematics this year show that the school has the capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. Some are slow to settle initially but with good levels of individual attention, they participate enthusiastically and enjoy learning. They make new friends quickly and behave well. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is better when children work in small groups on activities that are matched to their needs. Occasionally, when they work in a class with Year 1 pupils, the level of challenge is too high and some then struggle to maintain concentration. A satisfactory curriculum allows children to select from activities that are adult-led and those they choose for themselves, helping them gain confidence

and independence. Most children achieve the levels expected in all but their literacy skills and aspects of numeracy, for example, calculation skills. Effective strategies, such as speaking, reading, writing and number activities, are in place to address this. The classroom accommodation is satisfactory with adequate resources to stimulate learning but the outdoor area still requires further development. Effective leadership ensures good teamwork between teacher and support staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching by ensuring expectations of all pupils are high enough and work is matched closely to their needs, particularly in relation to the more able.
- Involve pupils more in setting their own targets and provide them with the guidance they need to achieve them.
- Ensure that all leaders carry out their roles effectively and that all staff take responsibility for standards attained by pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and most achieve the expected levels in all but their literacy and calculation skills. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at overall average standards. Standards in reading are above average. Pupils make slightly better progress in Years 1 and 2 where teaching is stronger and teacher expectations are higher. Overall achievement is generally satisfactory. After the school implemented a programme that provides pupils with more opportunities to write in every subject standards are now average. Improved provision in mathematics, particularly problem-solving and calculation skills, is helping to raise standards and pupils say that numeracy lessons are interesting. However, the more able pupils could achieve more through greater challenge. Pupils with specific learning needs achieve well when supported individually, but less so in whole class situations where teachers do not always accommodate their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect other cultures well and work comfortably with everyone. Many visitors and visits help them gain a good understanding of the wider world. Most work hard in lessons, even when these are uninspiring and they willingly undertake projects at home to extend their learning. Although the attendance of a few is poor because of the holidays they take in school time, the vast majority attend regularly because they like being at school. Pupils are kind and considerate and, through an effective 'buddy' system, they befriend those who have no one to play with or are upset. Well-motivated school councillors decide on new playground equipment and re-cycling activities. Pupils contribute well to the wider community by being involved in village events and church activities. Pupils are very aware of safety issues and understand the dangers of drugs. They understand well the need for a healthy lifestyle, with many attending sports clubs, selecting healthy lunches and eating fruit. Although pupils are keen to learn and develop good social

skills that will held them in good stead for the future, the average standards they attain mean their readiness for the next stage of their education is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Some teaching in the school is good because it is lively, challenging, holds pupils' interest and helps them achieve well. In these lessons, teachers ask probing questions that make pupils think about their work, discuss their ideas with others and express their views confidently. This is particularly so when pupils work in small groups, where they have more opportunities to talk and learn from each other. Skilled teaching assistants are good at supporting these small groups but their expertise is not always maximised in whole-class teacher-led sessions. Many lessons, while generally satisfactory, are less stimulating and result in pupils learning at a slower pace. In these lessons, teachers talk for too long, do not involve pupils of differing abilities enough, and provide tasks that are not matched well enough to pupils' needs to challenge them fully, particularly the more able. The emphasis is too much on giving the pupils information rather than encouraging enquiry. In some lessons all pupils do the same work, regardless of their ability, and as a result some do not learn as much as they could.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory in that it ensures pupils cover the work they should and that, because of mixed age classes, teachers follow a programme to take into account what pupils have done previously. The school is developing more links between subjects so pupils make better sense of what they are learning. However opportunities for pupils to undertake independent tasks that challenge them to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding are missed. Provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection. The impact of these improvements is reflected in the improved standards, particularly in writing. Appropriate additional activities are planned when individual pupils need specific help but the impact is sometimes lost because the school has limited space for pupils to work uninterrupted in small groups. Improved provision for personal, social and health education supports pupils' good personal development by boosting their confidence, raising self-esteem and giving a good insight into the world beyond school. Additional activities enrich the curriculum, with particular strengths in the arts, music and sports.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care arrangements are good. Pupils know to whom to go in the school for help if they are worried or upset. The procedures for child protection, health, safety and safeguarding are all secure. Pupils new to the school, often with specific social or educational needs, are supported sensitively with external agencies involved where appropriate. Pupils in Year 6 feel well prepared to move to their secondary schools.

There are effective procedures to monitor pupils' long term progress and identify when pupils are falling behind. In some classes, pupils have individual targets but these targets are frequently too general in nature. Not all teachers discuss the targets with their pupils or refer to them

enough during lessons. Teachers mark work regularly and offer helpful advice but do not check that pupils have responded to this advice in order to improve their work and achieve their targets. The school recognises the need to work more closely with parents as a few parents feel that communications with the school could be better, particularly in relation to their children's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher ensures that the school runs in an orderly manner and that pupils feel happy and secure. Following numerous staff changes, a suitable leadership team has been formed but its work has yet to impact on improving pupils' attainment and progress. School self-evaluation is led largely by the headteacher and she has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In order to sustain improvement the school recognises the need for those in the leadership team to support the headteacher more fully in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. Subject leaders regularly carry out reviews of their subjects but actions taken to remedy weaknesses often lack rigour, particularly in relation to checking that work set for pupils is informed by effective use of all assessment data and information. Governors see the school as an important part of the community and promote suitable links with other schools and organisations. Sound financial management ensures that priorities such as staff training are adequately resourced. Governors are very supportive and are keen for the school to do well. However, there is scope for them to act more robustly as critical friends and do more to improve attendance.

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

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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

28 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Tydd St Mary Church of England Primary School, Tydd St Mary, Cambridgeshire, PE13 5QY

I am writing to tell you what I found out when I came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to your teachers. It was good to meet you. Thank you for making me feel welcome and for being so friendly and polite. I enjoyed talking to you about school, the good friends you make and the trips you go on. I particularly liked the way you help around the school and look after each other.

Your school is satisfactory and has some good aspects. These are the things I particularly liked:

- You achieve average standards and you all make satisfactory progress. Your writing is much better than it used to be so things are improving.
- In the good lessons you have, you work really hard and do well.
- The activities teachers plan are satisfactory and the trips and clubs are good.
- You behave well and enjoy learning. You know about staying fit and healthy.
- You know who to go to in school if you are worried or unhappy.
- The headteacher and all the staff take good care of you.

These are things I have asked the school to do so that it can become even better:

- Make sure that teachers expect more from you, especially those of you who find some of the work easy.
- Make sure teachers check what you can already do when they plan new work.
- Make sure that all the staff and governors work together, helping each other to improve your school.
- Make sure teachers discuss your targets with you and show you how to achieve them.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could make sure you always do your best and ask for harder work if you think your work is too easy.

I hope that you will all do well in the future. Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison Lead inspector