

North Somercotes CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120692
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313716
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Paul
Headteacher	Mr M Redmile
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
School address	Warren Road North Somercotes Lincolnshire LN11 7QB
Telephone number	01507 358221
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school in a small village where pupils come from a wide rural area. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is about average, but the number of pupils with a statement for special educational need is higher than average. A lower than average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are lower than the expected levels.

A declining roll has resulted in the school having mixed age classes in Years 1 and 2 for the first time. The school has a high number of pupils than usually found who join other than at the start of their Reception Year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. A friendly family atmosphere helps pupils feel cared for and valued. They form good relationships and trust all the adults that work with them. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and become responsible young people. While most parents are positive about the school, a number feel that their views are not taken into account sufficiently. Inspectors feel procedures to consult with parents and keep them informed are satisfactory.

Good teaching and learning together with regular checks on pupils' progress ensure all achieve well. At the end of the Reception Year, most children achieve the expected levels. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to progress well and reach standards that overall are above average. Standards are average in writing and have declined mainly as result of children's lower starting point on entry to the Foundation Stage and pupils having too few opportunities to develop their skills. Good progress is maintained in Years 3 to 6. Standards in Year 6 are above average with English being a strength. Good support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/ or disabilities ensures they achieve well. The school's curriculum is good and places high emphasis on developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to raise pupils' achievement in all subjects. Excellent out of class activities help pupils understand the importance of keeping fit, healthy and appreciate the wider world. However, they have few opportunities to learn about the multicultural nature of British society. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work and stay safe.

Good leadership and management have ensured the school's improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is now analysed in detail to set challenging targets and subject leaders contribute well to improving provision. Standards in science have risen and appropriate action is being taken to tackle the decline in pupils' writing skills. Raising standards and supporting pupils' good personal development are at the centre of the school's work so that every pupil is well prepared for the future. The headteacher takes effective action to support staff and good teamwork helps the school achieve success. Astute financial management ensures priorities, such as good resourcing for assessment and literacy training of staff are met successfully. The school also gives good value for money. While not all parents are happy with the mixed age classes, the school has made the best arrangements possible this year. Governors support the school well and check its performance closely. The school is accurate in its self-assessment. It is a happy place where pupils thrive. The quality of care and education is good and standards in Year 6 have improved since 2006. Consequently, the capacity to make further improvements is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching in the Reception class builds on children's satisfactory pre-school experience, whether it is in the school's Nursery or other playgroups, and as a result children achieve well. Children settle quickly into the Foundation Stage because there is a strong emphasis on developing their personal and social skills. Under the new co-ordinator's effective leadership provision is good. Children experience a good balance of adult-guided activities and those chosen by the children themselves and this helps them gain confidence and independence.

They work and play safely together within a well-ordered environment. The outdoor area is designed particularly well to support good learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils in Years 1 and 2 more time to practice their writing skills to raise standards.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to learn about the diverse cultures in British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achieve well. From below expected levels of knowledge and skills in the Foundation Stage, pupils reach above average standards by the time they leave the school. Standards at Key Stage 2 have improved since 2006.

Good provision in the in the Foundation Stage results in most children achieving the expected levels in all the areas of learning and a few exceed these. In Years 1 and 2 in 2007, standards in writing fell to average and the school is addressing this by giving pupils more time to share ideas and write more often in all subjects. In Years 3 to 6, most pupils progress well. Occasionally, pupils who join the school later than Year 2, make lesser gains despite the school's good efforts to support them because they take time to settle in. In Year 6, standards in English are well above average and this enables pupils' to make good progress in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well because of the good additional support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good attendance and positive approach to learning reflect their enjoyment of school. 'I love being at school because there's so many brilliant clubs to go to', is a typical comment from many. They know how to stay safe, understand the dangers of drugs and who to go to if they feel threatened. They confidently talk about their feelings in class discussions and to staff. Pupils know about healthy foods and exercise vigorously, appreciating the many sports activities on offer. Lunchtimes are a positive social occasion and most choose healthy options that include the good school meals. The school council influences school improvement. For example, they consider suitable play equipment for lunchtime breaks and hold weekly surgeries for pupils to raise issues. Older pupils have many responsibilities such as serving school meals at lunchtimes. Through working with many visitors and visits, pupils gain a good understanding of their own culture, different faiths, art and music, but are less aware of the multicultural nature of modern Britain. By raising money for charity, working on environmental projects or donating gifts, such as for 'Meals on Wheels' at harvest-time, pupils support the wider community well. They develop good workplace skills by working co-operatively and achieve well in their basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are mostly lively and teachers pose challenging questions that encourage pupils to discuss and share ideas. Most respond enthusiastically and enjoy such tasks. Teachers plan work that is generally matched well to pupils' needs but in occasional lessons it is pitched at a level that is too easy for some and too hard for others. Standards in science have improved

because of the increased emphasis on practical activities where pupils explore and discover for themselves. Such approaches are being extended to other subjects. Where teachers make learning more visual, for example through drama or interactive whiteboards, pupils find it easier to understand what they are learning. Good use is made of computers for pupils' to do their own research. Support staff are used well to help all pupils participate but occasionally, during teachers' presentations, they have little to do. Regular assessment and monitoring procedures help identify pupils who need additional support so that teachers can consider how best to help them. Setting individual targets is proving effective in encouraging pupils to work hard and thus achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well structured to help pupils build successfully on previous work. Teachers are beginning to link work across subjects, for example, history and design technology, to help pupils make better sense of their learning, but this practice is not fully effective in all classes. Events such as science days give pupils good opportunities to develop projects with others. With a decline in writing in Years 1 and 2, current priorities include developing pupils' skills. To raise standards further in mathematics more time is being devoted to develop pupils' problem-solving skills. Effective additional programmes help pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities to participate fully. The school's good computer facilities are used well to improve pupils' computer skills and many spend lunchtimes designing web pages and newsletters. A well-structured programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development. Enrichment activities, including French for all pupils, are very good. Many visitors and visits bring learning alive and provide pupils with a good insight into the world of work and leisure. The quality of sports and physical education is excellent. Specialist sports coaches inspire pupils and the many clubs are extremely popular.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care arrangements are good. Pupils feel they are listened to and know who to go to if they are worried or upset. External agencies are contacted where appropriate. Pupils are supported sensitively when they first start school and prepared well for secondary school. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are satisfactory, as are the required safeguarding procedures. Some parents are concerned that the school places too much emphasis on healthy eating. The school, in line with government guidance, is doing a good job in promoting healthy lifestyles.

Pupils' progress is assessed thoroughly to set accurate targets and identify those who may be falling behind or need specific help. This information is generally used well to support and guide pupils so they can achieve their individual targets. Teachers' marking also gives good guidance on how pupils can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is supported well in making the improvements necessary to help pupils achieve more. All staff work closely in setting priorities and taking the action required to realise higher standards. Sustained hard work has, for example,

led to improved provision. Higher standards in science and the focus on improving pupils' writing skills have already made an impact on standards in English by the end of Year 6. Teachers now have good quality assessment information to support their planning and access to good training to improve their teaching. While regular review of provision and pupils' performance identifies what needs to be done, subject leaders do not always have the time they need to pursue developments rigorously.

Governors visit the school regularly and are well informed. They challenge staff by checking that the agreed priorities are having the desired impact and elicit what needs to be done to improve further. They see the school as a vital part of the local community and work hard to secure its good standing in the area.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 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	2
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	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?	2

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 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 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

24 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Somercotes CE Primary School, North Somercotes, LN11 7QB

I am writing to tell you what we found out when we came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so friendly and polite. I enjoyed chatting to you over lunch and finding out about all the physical activities you do and the huge number of clubs you can join. We particularly liked the way the older pupils served lunch to everyone and how nicely you talked to each other.

Yours is a good school. These are the things we particularly liked.

- You try hard and make good progress. Your work in English and science in Year 6 is so much better than last year.
- Your work has improved because the teaching is good and you enjoy learning.
- Teachers plan interesting work for you with many visitors and trips that help you learn more; you have excellent clubs and sports activities you can join.
- Your behaviour is good and you know about staying safe and healthy.
- You make good friends and can go to someone if you are worried or unhappy.
- The headteacher and all the staff work hard to make sure everyone does their best to help you learn and enjoy life as sensible young people.

These are things we have asked the school to do to become even better.

- In Years 1 and 2, try to write more, as often as you can, in all your subjects so that you achieve higher standards.
- Help you to find out more about the cultures of different communities that live in Britain.

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 need it.

It is lovely that you enjoy school and I hope that you continue to do well.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison Lead Inspector