

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120407
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380011
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Hughes

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 of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Garland
Headteacher	Anita Bandey
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Hughes

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector sampled 10 lessons taught by four teachers, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection; she observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including monitoring information, improvement plans, records of the analysis and the tracking of pupils' progress, and of classroom observations. She also sampled pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked attendance. She analysed questionnaires submitted by five staff, 22 pupils, and 24 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School is a much smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below other schools nationally and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. More pupils join and leave the school outside normal times than is usually found. The school has recently been awarded Healthy Schools status. The school meets the current government floor standards.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Although improving, the school is not yet good because standards and progress, particularly in mathematics, are lower than those nationally and the full impact of the school's assessment and tracking of pupil progress has not been sufficiently established.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, standards in Key Stage 1 have improved and writing standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are currently above national expectations. Progress in reading and writing is improving throughout the school and there are signs of accelerated progress, which is closing the gaps between attainment in the school and attainment nationally. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory and the gap in attainment is not closing as quickly.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enthusiastic about what they are doing. Their behaviour is good. They are polite and courteous, demonstrating respectful attitudes towards each other, with older pupils supporting younger ones as a matter of course. The school provides a safe, caring environment for learning.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, pupils make better progress and are enthusiastic about their learning. However, in some lessons, the pace is too slow and work is not matched well to pupils' needs, with potentially higher-attaining pupils not being challenged effectively. The development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum is currently not a focus in planning and so happens in some lessons, but not others. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and children enjoy an exciting and varied curriculum.
- As leaders of teaching in the school, the senior leaders have introduced teaching and assessment strategies which are improving the rate of pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing. Performance is managed appropriately to support improvements in teaching and learning. The governing body is developing its capacity to monitor progress and challenge the school to raise standards.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring

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visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils are clear about what level they are working at and how they can improve
 - helping pupils tackle mathematical problems systematically
 - ensuring that pupils' problem-solving skills are developed from their earliest years in school.

- Consolidate the current assessment and tracking systems throughout the school, so that:
 - there is effective monitoring of the progress of all pupils
 - assessment informs planning that matches activities accurately to pupils' needs
 - teachers challenge more-able pupils sufficiently.

- Develop skills across the curriculum through:
 - ensuring that planning for all subjects includes literacy, numeracy and communication skills where appropriate
 - developing and implementing a cohesive approach to monitoring the delivery and impact of cross-curricular learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Although each cohort is different, generally, children start in the Reception class with skills levels just below those expected nationally. Recent improvements in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage mean that children now achieve well. There are exciting opportunities for them to investigate the world around them through such activities as water and role-play both inside and outdoors. These develop a range of skills broadly in line with national expectations through practical and enjoyable experiences as well as encouraging a sense of wonder and thirst for learning. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to investigate mathematical problems and develop their problem-solving skills.

Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are below average, with pupils being a term behind the levels generally expected for their age in their learning in reading and mathematics. A strong focus on writing last year resulted in above-average standards. The pupils are enthused and motivated to write through the introduction of 'Rocket Writing', which challenges them to 'reach the stars' with their writing. Pupils write about exciting topics such as Jack's adventures up the beanstalk and marking in books encourages them to move on to the next steps in their learning. As a result, pupils are now making good progress. Progress in reading and mathematics is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, but the teaching of the sounds that letters make

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(phonics) is helping reading to improve.

At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are still below average for both English and mathematics, with pupils working two terms behind other pupils nationally. However, progress throughout Key Stage 2 is improving. School data show that many pupils are making accelerated progress in reading and writing, particularly in Years 3 and 4, which is closing the gap in attainment between them and other pupils nationally. Lessons using first-hand experiences, such as pancake making, inspire pupils to talk enthusiastically about their learning. Their enjoyment is evident in their subsequent enthusiasm for writing about the process. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to solve mathematical problems systematically when undertaking investigations. The level of pupils' reading is variable, but all pupils use a range of strategies, including sounding out words, to understand and draw information from texts.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the school make at least satisfactory progress from their starting points and many make good progress. This is because their needs are identified early and the support they get is matched well and effective.

Parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress. Although this is accurate for most pupils in reading and writing, progress in mathematics is satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

The majority of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and most pupils say they learn a lot in lessons. This is not always the case, as in some lessons pupils make no better than expected progress. When teaching is good, activities are exciting and challenging for all pupils who are enthused and motivated to learn. For example, a 'magic egg hunt' for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage saw them scurrying around the playground excitedly matching and reading words, with both boys and girls eager to follow this up with a writing task. In Years 3 and 4, while looking at 3-dimensional shapes, pupils were able to have high-level discussion about the difference between a vertex and an apex.

In some lessons, however, the pace slows while the teacher does most of the talking and children begin to lose interest and are not so readily involved in their learning. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported, but more-able pupils are not always challenged. This means that they can get bored and do not always make the progress they are capable of.

Marking of pupils' work is diligent and teachers write encouraging comments. In some cases, teachers give pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve their work, but this is not consistent across the school and is sometimes too general to be of real help to pupils. It is not clear from the pupils work that they have the opportunity routinely to respond to comments made by the teacher, especially when working in loose leaf files as these are not always well organised. The introduction of

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target sheets and cards in the books is helping pupils understand the next steps in their learning. They are used well in Key Stage 1 and their use is becoming more effective in Key Stage 2.

The impact of teaching is positive on pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Personal, social and health education underpins much of the curriculum through following the SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) project and through adult modelling of appropriate behaviour and responses. Pupils see these lessons as important opportunities to talk about safety, tolerance, and respect as teachers create a trusting environment for discussion. Pupils say that they also give them opportunities to say what they would like to happen in the school. This is reflected in the 'Good Learner Awards' and the 'Respect Tree' which recognises practical examples throughout the school and was also very evident in pupils' responses during the inspection.

The planned curriculum is thorough and, in good lessons, teachers and support staff encourage the use of language, mathematics, and communication skills in different subjects. However, this is not always planned into the lesson and so it tends to happen spontaneously and lacks consistency across the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have a strong moral code and have high expectations that everyone will behave well and with respect to each other. This means that behaviour throughout the school is good and the few incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively. Sanctions have rarely to be used, but are effective when needed. Pupils support each other in their learning and the older pupils take it as a normal expectation that 'we look after the younger ones' on the playground and on school trips, while younger pupils look to them as role models.

The vast majority of pupils say that they feel safe in school; that there is no bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational needs. They say that behavioural incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils say that the 'worry boxes' in each class are rarely used 'because we don't have any worries that we can't tell someone about'. This reflects the safe, caring environment that the school provides and one which parents, carers and pupils recognise as a strength of the school.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is improving and is broadly average. The school has worked closely with parents and carers, who have responded positively to recent measures introduced to ensure their children attend regularly and are punctual to school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher involves staff and others with a key interest in the school in making decisions. Following the introduction of a new assessment and tracking system, the senior leadership team has begun to make more-effective use of data to monitor progress in school. This has identified where accelerated progress is being made and

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gaps in attainment that the school has made a priority to close.

Improvement in key areas such as the Early Years Foundation Stage and writing in Key Stage 1 demonstrates the school's capacity to improve. There are no specific groups of pupils who make less progress than others in the school, but some more-able pupils are not always challenged enough to help them make the progress they are capable of. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well, providing good support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and for those who join the school outside normal times.

The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and her staff and is beginning to challenge and hold the school to account more rigorously than previously. As a result of effective performance management by the leadership of the school, the quality of teaching has improved. The school's vision is communicated clearly and parents and carers feel well informed. They agree overwhelmingly that they would recommend the school to another parent.

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils, but does not always challenge more-able pupils effectively. Pupils access a good range of after-school clubs enthusiastically and say they enjoy the school trips, which 'help us with our topics'. The ethos of the school promotes strong spiritual and moral development. Exciting activities such as scented, coloured water-mixing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and discovering about dinosaurs in Key Stage 2 develop a wonder of the wider world. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and demonstrate a mature tolerance of each other's differences. The curriculum develops an understanding of different cultures through art, music and literature, as well as through visitors to the school.

The leadership of the school has ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding are compliant with requirements. Records and checks are robust and appropriate policies and practices provide a safe environment for the pupils and staff.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.



24 February 2012

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Deeping St Nicholas Primary School, Spalding, PE11 3DG

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. It was lovely talking to you all about what you enjoy doing at school and joining you in lessons. I particularly enjoyed your singing in assembly and joining in the 'magic egg hunt' with the Early Years Foundation Stage children.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education and many of you are making good progress in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics, however, is not as good. Your teachers work hard to make the lessons interesting and exciting, but, sometimes, the work is too easy for some of you so that you don't make as much progress as you could.

You say that you enjoy coming to school and I could see that by your good behaviour and the way you all get on well together and help each other. You can feel proud of the caring atmosphere in your school.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help you make better progress in mathematics so that you achieve as well as pupils in other schools
- make sure that they know how well you are doing and help you to understand how you can improve your work
- help you to improve your reading, writing, numeracy and communication skills in all subjects, not just during English and mathematics lessons

You can play your part by making sure you follow your teachers' guidance on how to improve your learning and use these skills in all your work. I am sure that you will continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.

Yours sincerely

Susan Hughes
Lead inspector

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