

Lutton St Nicholas Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120421
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358759
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Howard
Headteacher	Luke Whitney
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who observed three teachers over nine lessons. Meetings were held with subject leaders, representatives of the governing body, and with groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its analysis of pupils' attainment and achievement and its projections for the future, its development plan and policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils, and the 27 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- It investigated the extent to which assessment practices enable pupils to make accelerated progress.
- It determined the capacity of subject leaders to drive improvement in their areas.
- It explored how accurately work is matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities.

Information about the school

The school, which serves pupils from the Fens, is very small in relation to other primary schools. Two thirds travel from outside the catchment area to attend. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. There are more boys than girls. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities of which most are moderate learning needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A higher proportion of pupils than is typical join or leave the school at other than the expected times.

Since the last inspection, the school has become a federation with Gedney Church End School which is located three miles away. The headteacher took up his post in April 2010 and is headteacher of both schools, dividing his time equally between them. The schools share a management structure and a governing body. The school is part of a cluster with eight primary schools which work together to broaden learning opportunities.

In January 2011, the school was awarded National Healthy Schools status.

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: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. All pupils achieve satisfactorily, reaching average levels of attainment. Some aspects of the school's work are good. Staff care for, guide and support pupils well, backed up by effective safeguarding procedures, so that pupils feel very safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of the importance of living healthily and many adopt good exercise and eating habits. Pupils behave well, displaying positive attitudes to school and learning.

The headteacher's clear direction, based on detailed monitoring and accurate self-evaluation of the school's performance, has resulted in good systems being put in place. Clearly defined responsibilities of subject leaders, for example, and their accountability for what they do, are leading to more consistent practices that are laying the foundations for steady improvement in their subjects. Their impact is patchy because monitoring of their areas is quite narrow. Nevertheless, it is satisfactory, as they increasingly use the skills gained from training. The governing body shares the ambition and commitment of the staff, is involved in many aspects of the school's work, and is responding to the needs of the federation in its practices. However, it does not find out enough for itself about how well the school is performing to be able to make decisions about how it should move forward. Altogether, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The federated arrangements contribute to this and, although much more can be achieved, the curriculum is being strengthened and the management skills of staff used to pupils' benefit.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are eager to learn and make quick progress in their personal development. However, activities, both indoors and outdoors, are not regularly wide-ranging enough to promote all aspects of learning, including encouraging their independence and ownership of what they learn. While teaching is satisfactory overall through the school, there is some good teaching. It is the inconsistency across lessons that slows pupils' rate of progress. Since the last inspection, staff's knowledge about the levels at which pupils are working has moved forward significantly, but the use of the information in planning lessons is variable. As a result, the work that pupils are given is not always accurately matched to their needs so that it is difficult for them to make the progress that they could. Summaries of learning at the ends of lesson, to enable both teachers and pupils to assess the quality of learning, are not often in place. Questioning is often a strength in moving learning forward although, at times, it is not specific enough to encourage progress towards a particular goal. A good aspect of assessment is pupils' growing involvement in their progress, through their targets and increasing evaluation of their own work. Marking generally states pupils' achievements. Less regularly, pupils are advised of their next steps in learning.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress through the school by ensuring that
 - the work that they are given is matched closely to their abilities and offers a good level of challenge
 - marking informs pupils regularly of how to move forward in their learning
 - summaries of lessons take place and enable both staff and pupils to assess the quality of learning in the lesson
 - there is always a wide range of learning opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, both in the classroom and outdoors, to enable them to develop greater independence, a sense of ownership of learning and ensure that they can develop a full range of skills.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that
 - subject leaders monitor the performance of their areas regularly and broadly, evaluate their findings and address them so that provision and outcomes improve further
 - the governing body gains enough independent knowledge about the school's performance to be able to influence its direction.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Both boys and girls make satisfactory progress from their 'in line' knowledge and skills at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage, aided by a variety of teaching methods and ways of learning that engage them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who join the school at a later stage of their primary education, also make satisfactory progress because they are supported appropriately. Intervention groups, which have a specific focus, also benefit pupils who have gaps in their learning or who find some concepts difficult to understand. In a few lessons, pupils of all abilities make good progress. For example, in a literacy lesson, older pupils created good quality paragraphs which described graphically a volcanic eruption, incorporating features such as alliteration and similes. Their good quality writing was promoted by regular sharing of ideas and an effective stimulus, appealing to boys and girls. In less effective lessons, learning is too passive and teacher-driven so that pupils' motivation and their quality of learning decrease.

Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around school. They get on well with each other in the close-knit community. The attendance of many is above average, reflecting their positive attitudes towards school. Low attendance in one year group, which is being addressed, pulls attendance averages down. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of why it is important to live healthily, enjoying the wide range of sporting activities and showing increasing enthusiasm for eating nutritious foods. Pupils feel safe and speak confidently about how to stay safe in a range of situations because personal, social and health education is comprehensive. They have regular chances to discuss their feelings

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and to consider their views about moral and ethical situations. Although the school is starting to build up a structured programme to extend pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of the world, pupils' understanding of the lifestyles and practices of other people are less well developed than their spiritual, moral and social understanding. The newly formed school council and house system are providing a wider range of opportunities for pupils to be involved in improving the school, including working with the community. Together with average attainment, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are keen to learn. This is encouraged further by positive relationships between staff and pupils. Teaching always makes the purpose of learning clear so that pupils know what the focus is. They particularly like lessons where they can learn for themselves and have enough time to practise new skills. In the best lessons, work offers a good level of challenge. When this is the case, progress accelerates, but sometimes work is too hard or too easy. Pupils are being given greater ownership of their learning in literacy and numeracy and enjoy working towards their targets. Marking is regular, encouraging and often tells pupils how well they have done but not often how to move further forward. Advice given during lessons is usually helpful although the irregularity of plenary sessions at the end of lessons means that opportunities to assess the knowledge and understanding of pupils are sometimes missed.

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The school is making learning more relevant to pupils, who can see its purpose. Lessons also promote pupils' personal and inter-personal development through regular working in pairs and groups as well as independently. Planning usually takes into account the imbalance between boys and girls by responding to the ways in which both sexes learn best. Links across subjects are growing. Writing tasks, for example, often take place within a specific context, as well as in discrete literacy lessons, increasing pupils' motivation. A stronger aspect of the curriculum is the variety of visitors and visits which give pupils an effective 'hook' to their learning. The federation broadens opportunities for pupils by enabling joint visits and a popular shared after-school club. Partnerships with other primary schools and with other organisations have created extra opportunities, both in and out of school, including specialist sports coaching. Provision for pupils who find learning difficult is appropriate for their needs. That for pupils with a particular talent or gift is in the early stages. Pupils enjoy the range of after-school clubs which are as diverse as the 'Back-stage Academy,' and reasoning, which appeal to boys and girls equally.

Systems for the care and support of pupils are comprehensive and well coordinated, in a school where the staff know all pupils well and in which any concerns are promptly addressed. Parents and carers agree, showing confidence in the school's practices and the communication between home and school. Regular health and safety procedures back-up daily routines and checks. As a result, the school has good evidence to show the positive impact of their actions on pupils' confidence, self-esteem and attitudes towards learning. Arrangements for pupils to move classes and to make the transition to secondary school are effective in helping them settle well to new challenges because they take into account pupils' individual circumstances and needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since his appointment, the headteacher has gathered extensive evidence about the performance of the school and specifically the progress that pupils make. His monitoring of teaching and learning has been regular and accurate. Good systems have been put in place to drive improvement. As a result, the school demonstrates satisfactory equality of opportunity and enables it to tackle any discrimination, through its analysis of pupils' performance. The priority is to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress. Satisfactory impact is evident as, for example, the findings of class tracking systems are used by class teachers to better inform intervention. The headteacher has brought in an ethos of greater accountability of staff, together with appropriate professional development opportunities for staff at both of the federated schools to enable them to fulfil their roles. However, several strategies are still developing and have not had time to show full impact. This is

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the case with regard to subject leaders whose monitoring roles are still developing. Similarly, while the governing body oversees safeguarding procedures and practices effectively, through thorough checks of health and safety procedures and overseeing of good staff training, they do not find out enough for themselves to be able to steer the school's direction. Governance is therefore satisfactory. The range of partnerships is gathering pace and each one plays a sound part in enriching pupils' learning, development and enjoyment, including through joint training sessions for staff across the cluster. The school is promoting community cohesion effectively locally although there is unevenness in provision between the socio-economic, religious and ethnic strands. Home-school relationships also foster pupils' development although the school does not yet offer parents and carers opportunities to gain helpful information to enable them to support their children's learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children generally start Reception with levels of knowledge and skills that match expectations for their age, although reading levels are often below. They make quick progress in their personal development and gain confidence through the support and care of the older pupils with whom they often share the accommodation. The children are happy and behave well. They are eager to learn and settle sensibly to learning. Teacher-directed learning leads to appropriate progress in a range of skills. This was demonstrated by one of the children organising the other children into the shape of a square and recognising that there needed to be four sides. There is a good balance between teacher-led learning and the children learning for themselves. However, there are not always enough activities in the classroom or outdoors to motivate and excite the children, to promote fully their independent skills and to ensure full coverage of all aspects of learning.

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The children are encouraged to take responsibility through the day and proudly carry out their roles. They play and learn safely, taking into account the needs of the other children. Children have an emerging understanding of why they need to keep fit and eat healthy foods.

Day-to-day contact with parents and carers ensures that the staff have up-to-date information about the children and communication between home and school is regular. Parents and carers praise the school's arrangements for transition of their children into school, which result in a quick start to learning. There are not yet opportunities for parents and carers to learn how to support their children's learning. The leader of the stage ensures that children's achievements are recorded regularly. It shows their satisfactory progress through the stage, including their emergent writing, so that they go into Year 1 with average attainment.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, most were supportive of every aspect. Every parent and carer felt that the school keeps their children safe, helps them to have a healthy lifestyle and deals with unacceptable behaviour well. A few parents and carers added comments, almost all of which referred to their children's individual needs and circumstances. Most were positive about the school's actions. All comments have been shared with the headteacher, while preserving the confidentiality of the writer.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lutton St Nicholas Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	59	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	10	37	16	59	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	22	18	67	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	41	12	44	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	44	12	44	3	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	30	19	70	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	41	13	48	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	26	15	56	3	11	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	26	20	74	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	15	21	78	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	52	12	44	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	48	10	37	1	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



9 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lutton St Nicholas Primary School, Spalding, PE12 9HN

We enjoyed very much the two days that we spent with you recently. Thank you for showing us round and for telling us your views about your school. We were pleased that you enjoy school, behave well and that many of you have above average attendance.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. Teaching is satisfactory and leads to you making satisfactory progress. You reach average levels by the end of Year 6. We liked the way that you can learn in different ways, including learning for yourselves and practising what you have learnt in several subjects. The headteacher, who has a lot of good ideas to improve the school, is giving you more say in improving it and taking responsibility. The new school council is a good forum for you to share ideas. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and many of you are showing that you know the importance of keeping fit by exercising and eating healthily. Those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage look forward to learning. There are not regularly enough activities for you, though, to be able to practise the full range of skills that you need. Your headteacher and the staff are going to put this right.

The headteacher is keen to improve other aspects of your school. We have asked him to help you to make quicker progress by making sure that the work that you are given is a good match to the levels at which you are working and that marking tells you how to improve your work. We also want you to have regular summaries in lessons so that you and your teachers are clear what you have learnt. The staff and governing body are going to find out more for themselves about how well the school is doing so that they can make and oversee improvements to move the school on.

We are sure that you will help the staff to make these improvements by working hard and taking notice of what the teachers say you should do to improve your work.

We also hope that all of you will soon have above average attendance.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector

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