

Quadring Cowley & Brown's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120552
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358788
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Iszatt
Headteacher	Nicola Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were visited and four teachers and one teaching assistant were observed leading lessons. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including policies and arrangements for safeguarding children, the school improvement plan, and a full range of evidence on pupils' progress and attainment. The inspection team spoke with parents and carers and analysed 36 parental questionnaires, as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- Why is attainment not higher by the end of Year 2, if it is confirmed that good progress is made in the Early Years Foundation Stage?
- Are there variations in teaching quality in particular year groups?
- How well do teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of the mixed-age groupings?
- How well does the school's monitoring activity, by governors, leaders and managers, drive improvement?

Information about the school

This small rural school serves the local and wider area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and none has a statement of special educational needs. Classes are taught in mixed-age groups except for the Early Years Foundation Stage which comprises a class of 4 to 5 year olds. The majority of the teaching staff joined as newly qualified teachers within the last four years. The school holds the Activemark for sports provision, and Healthy Schools Status. The governing body has vacancies at present and a new Chair was appointed in November 2010, the second since the previous inspection.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in teaching, learning and progress in Key Stage 1, in governance and in the school's engagement with parents and carers.

Although pupils make good progress in response to good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, achievement is inadequate overall because pupils in Years 1 and 2 make inadequate progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is demonstrated in their work, through discussions with pupils, and from observations of teaching and learning. Consequently, teaching is inadequate overall, despite some good features in Years 3 to 6.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not acquire knowledge and skills in a systematic way. Too little attention is paid to progress in basic skills, knowledge and understanding before moving on to harder work. On occasion, lack of attention in ensuring that pupils understand the tasks expected of them leads to wasted time while they wait for the teacher's attention. Throughout the school, teachers do not always use the good information now available about pupils' prior learning effectively to inform their planning. Consequently, pupils' progress in mixed-age classes is uneven. This includes the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities because work in class is not consistently tailored to meet their needs.

Governance is inadequate because governors do not have sufficient understanding of their responsibilities and roles, such as promoting equality of opportunity and holding the school to account. The governing body has made plans and taken action to involve parents and carers more, but the impact is not yet evident. The school has lost the support of over 10% of parents and carers, who rightly express their concerns about the governance of the school, who feel their views are ignored, and who do not think that the senior leaders communicate well enough with them.

Strengths of the school are seen in the welcoming environment and teamwork among staff that ensures a very caring ethos. This helps lead to the good outcomes seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to the good personal development throughout the school. The lively curriculum is full of interest and variety, and includes aspects that help pupils understand their local rural community. For example, the school's development of an extensive nature reserve in the local area has encouraged pupils to be enthusiastic 'twitchers', using binoculars to help them recognise a variety of birds and their habitats. All this helps pupils develop good personal skills, enhanced through the social development with pupils of different ages, facilitated by the mixed-age classes.

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The leadership team has successfully implemented actions to drive improvement and the impact is evident in Key Stage 2 where teaching has improved and attainment is above average. Better systems have been brought in to track longer-term progress, although teachers' assessments are not always securely accurate. However, monitoring and evaluation of lessons has not focused sufficiently on the progress pupils make. Procedures are becoming more rigorous and weaknesses in teaching have been identified. The improvements made in recent months, the accuracy of self-evaluation in highlighting strengths and improvement points, and the success in accelerating progress in reading indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity to secure improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 so that a large majority make good progress by December 2011, by:
 - placing greater emphasis on systematically building basic skills including correct pencil hold, correct formation of letters and neat presentation
 - ensuring that pupils understand what is expected of them and remain engaged
 - pitching tasks more precisely to pupils' ability by using information about their progress more effectively.
 - Improve the effectiveness of the leadership of teaching and learning by:
 - focusing monitoring more sharply on the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils work are moderated effectively to ensure accuracy.
 - Improve governance by:
 - providing training to improve governors' understanding of their responsibilities and required action
 - ensuring that governors rigorously hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account for any weaknesses in the school.
 - Improve the engagement with parents and carers, so that parents and carers agree that their views are taken into account and that communication is effective.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Above-average attendance indicates how much pupils enjoy school. Pupils are eager to learn and respond best when lessons are engaging and challenging. They enjoy working collaboratively, as observed when Year 3 and 4 pupils worked together to devise a science investigation, and in Years 5 and 6 where pupils worked together to find out about life in the 1960s.

Current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach above-average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this picture is not reflected throughout the school and in recent years, the attainment of Year 2 pupils has been below average. This demonstrates inadequate progress considering pupils' starting points which are in line with expectations. Lesson observations and work scrutinies indicate that the pace of learning in lessons is

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often too slow for more-able pupils. They repeat things they can already do, while pupils who find learning more difficult complete little work because they lack the groundwork. Although progress has improved in reading and is now satisfactory there is still much work to be done to ensure that the good progress in Key Stage 2 is seen in all classes, especially in writing and mathematics.

Pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with courtesy and respect as they move around the school. Pupils feel safe and are confident about adult support if they are worried or have a problem. They are aware that a balanced diet as well as exercise is vital for their health and they are proud of the school's Activemark award and Healthy Schools status. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with particular strengths in their moral and social development. However, pupils' cultural development is not as strong as the pupils have limited opportunities to engage with others from communities different from their own. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, their above average literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, alongside their good personal skills, mean that they are well prepared for secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
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	2
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

The themed curriculum fits well into the school's mixed-age groupings because it enables basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT to be promoted through a range of subject areas

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at a range of levels. The curriculum clearly outlines how basic skills should be taught progressively, but it is not being effectively applied in lessons in Key Stage 1. For example, teaching gives insufficient attention to aspects such as correct pencil hold, correct formation of letters and neat presentation. Pupils are very enthusiastic about initiatives such as their work on sustainability in the local area, and their many extra-curricular sports and arts opportunities. This vibrancy in the curriculum leads pupils to develop good personal skills. Partnership work makes a significant contribution to the strength of the curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 2 where it has a good impact.

Although some good teaching was observed in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2, it has an inadequate impact on learning in Years 1 and 2. School leaders are working to improve the quality of teaching in this area and are aware that pupils need to make more progress in order to raise their levels of attainment. In the good lessons, teachers provide a range of learning activities for pupils that often require them to think things out for themselves. Questioning is often good and the use of the interactive whiteboard regularly provides good visual support for learning and a focus for the lesson. However, frequently in Years 1 and 2 but also sometimes in other classes, activities are too easy or too difficult for pupils. There are missed opportunities to extend the learning of more-able pupils with extension material at an earlier stage in lessons.

Pastoral care is good and all pupils are well prepared socially for their next class. As a result most pupils are confident. The coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been successful in sustaining good systems to ensure accurate identification of such pupils and support from well-trained teaching assistants and outside agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have improved outcomes in Key Stage 2 and improved middle leadership. Strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified and the school improvement plan identifies the correct priorities. Leaders are developing their use of information about pupils' performance and using this to tackle any weaknesses in provision. However, senior leaders have not been able to establish fully accurate tracking of pupils' progress as the most recent assessment data in Key Stage 1 is over-generous. School leaders acknowledge that pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 needs to improve. The regular monitoring of lessons has focused too little on the learning of pupils, so the impact of teaching has sometimes been missed. All staff are committed to school improvement and are working together, trying hard to ensure pupils' progress is more consistent.

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Improvements to governance have suffered a setback due to resignations and resulting vacancies. New members have not had time to receive sufficient training. The governing body supports the school but they are not aware of the seriousness of the shortfall in the performance of Key Stage 1 pupils. This, and their uncertain grasp of their responsibilities, renders governance inadequate.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate because teaching sometimes fails to provide work suited to different abilities and because pupils in Key Stage 1 underachieve. Community cohesion is satisfactorily promoted because the headteacher has provided an action plan and action is underway to extend pupils' experience of children of other backgrounds, ethnicities and faiths. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and at the time of the inspection all safeguarding documents met government requirements.

Too many parents and carers are unhappy with aspects of the school's work, despite actions the school has taken to develop its engagement with them. This indicates a lack of effective communication.

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	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are generally in line with expectations. As a result of good teaching, children leave the Reception class with above average attainment. The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well, with high expectations of good behaviour and cooperation. Children settle well into this happy and positive environment. They behave well and establish warm and positive relationships with adults and other children. They take turns and share resources well and enjoy the range of activities that are provided, for example using the dressing-up clothes with great enthusiasm to portray the story of Cinderella. Children are aware of

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how to keep healthy and suggest that 'fruit would be better to eat than cakes'. There is an appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and those chosen by children themselves. Records of continuous observation are kept, and prior assessment information is used well to ensure that children progress as quickly as they are able. The indoor classroom is good, and use of other facilities such as the hall, for dancing and dressing-up, enhances provision. However the school is aware that the good teacher-led learning is not readily embedded during children's free-choice outdoor activities, because planning for the outdoor environment is not as fine-tuned.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or spoke to inspectors report that the school keeps their children safe and helps them to have a healthy lifestyle. A few made positive comments including 'the emphasis is on happy children,' and 'the staff are enthusiastic and dedicated.' Inspection evidence confirms these views.

About 40% of responses, over a tenth of the whole parent body, included extensive explanations of their disaffection with the school. Their concerns are mostly about governance, difficulties in communication, and unsatisfactory progress in some classes. Questionnaire percentages shown below reflect these concerns and also show reservations about behaviour. Inspection evidence indicates behaviour and its management is good, but found both governance and progress inadequate. Inspectors found that the school's engagement with parents and carers is not fully effective and have identified this as an area for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Quadring Cowley & Brown's 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 107 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	67	8	22	3	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	47	14	39	1	3	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	39	15	42	4	11	2	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	53	8	22	4	11	3	8
The teaching is good at this school	17	47	11	31	4	11	3	8
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	31	18	50	4	11	2	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	53	13	36	1	3	1	3
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)	14	39	9	25	7	19	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	50	10	28	1	3	5	14
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	25	16	44	2	6	5	14
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	25	15	42	5	14	4	11
The school is led and managed effectively	13	36	12	33	0	0	9	25
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	53	9	25	3	8	5	14

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Quadring Cowley & Brown's Primary School, Spalding, PE11 4SQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. A particular thank you to those of you who took the time to speak to us and tell us about the things you do. Please also thank your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires. Here are some of the things we found out.

By the time you leave in Year 6 you are reaching standards in your work that are higher than those found in most schools. Your behaviour is good and during our lesson observations you were enthusiastic and tried hard to do your work. You have a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. You are good at helping each other to learn, and you told us how much you enjoy all the clubs and activities. However, your school is not doing as well as it should be in helping you to achieve your very best in all year groups, especially in writing and mathematics. Because of this, we have given your school a 'notice to improve'. Progress in Years 1 and 2 needs to improve, and so does the way the governing body works.

We have also asked the school to work out ways for your parents and carers to feel more in touch with what is happening in school, more involved in making decisions, and clearer about how you are doing and the progress you are making.

To help you all do well, we have asked your headteacher to make sure teachers use the information about what you know already to plan work that helps each of you learn as well as you can. We have also asked staff to focus on improving your handwriting in Years 1 and 2. You can help by trying hard with this.

We have asked your headteacher and governors to check regularly that our suggestions are being carried out by all staff and that all of you are making good progress in your work.

We are sure you will do all you can to help all the adults that work with you make your school better. You can all do this by continuing to work as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane

Lead inspector

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