

# Ruskington Chestnut Street CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120693
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358821
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lois Furness

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	366
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura Suffield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Chestnut Street Ruskington, Sleaford NG34 9DL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01526 832424
<b>Fax number</b>	01526 834574
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@chestnut-street.lincs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty-six lessons were observed and 15 teachers seen. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, staff and three members of the governing body. They spoke informally to parents and carers and pupils. The school improvement plan, safeguarding documentation, assessment records, planning documentation and the School Improvement Partner's reports were scrutinised, as was pupils' work in lessons and on display. In total, 146 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed. Eight staff responses, and 96 pupil questionnaires were also considered.

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

- If the decline in attainment at the end of both key stages has been halted, and the progress of pupils is improving through more effective use of assessment information.
- If leadership and management at all levels, including the governing body, have had sufficient impact on rectifying areas of weakness as well as the issues raised in the previous inspection report.
- If pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of British society.

## Information about the school

In this well-above-average sized primary school most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A below average number of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in two Reception classes, and in a pre-Reception class, which admits children at the start of the summer term in the academic year before they are five. There have been considerable staffing changes since the previous inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010, and a new deputy headteacher in January 2011. An assistant headteacher has been recently seconded from another school. The school has a number of externally accredited awards such as Healthy Schools status, and the Activemark award.

**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

Ruskington Chestnut Street C of E Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It has a number of strengths, including a calm and harmonious learning environment where pupils are cared for well, and show outstanding spiritual and moral awareness. As a result, pupils grow into confident and mature young people. Pupils' sense of right and wrong is very strong, and guides their good behaviour. They feel safe at school, free from bullying or harassment, knowing adults will always help them. One pupil commented, 'I have attended four schools, but this is the one where I feel really safe!' Pupils work well together in lessons. They enjoy the opportunities to talk to each other and share ideas. Responsibilities, such as being safety officers, house captains and members of the school council, are examples of how effectively pupils' contribute to the school community. Although pupils are aware of different cultures within the school, local and international communities, their understanding of the diversity of cultures within the United Kingdom is not sufficiently well developed. As yet, leaders do not evaluate the effect of the school's work on pupils' understanding of the make-up of British society.

Children get a good start to school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and make good progress. Progress in Years 1 to 5 is satisfactory and now good in Year 6. Information from national tests shows that attainment by the end of Year 6 had declined over the last three years from being above average to broadly average in English and mathematics. However, as a result of concerted action by the new headteacher this decline has been reversed, and current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain higher standards this year especially in reading and mathematics. Progress overall is satisfactory rather than good, because assessment information is not yet used consistently well enough in all classes. In addition, although marking is satisfactory, it does not consistently provide pupils with a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work. Useful comments are often made, but pupils are given insufficient time to respond to these. There are missed opportunities for pupils to be reminded of how well they are using their basic skills of literacy in other subjects. Teaching is satisfactory with an increasing amount that is good. Strengths of teaching include good subject knowledge, good relationships and the use of strategies to involve pupils in their learning. In some classes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of the amount of work completed or of pupils' presentation, including their handwriting and spelling.

The school is well led and managed. Though there is still more to do to improve progress and raise attainment, the new headteacher and leadership team have made a significant impact in a short time on the school's work. They have galvanised staff and governors into taking action that is having a tangible impact on improving provision and outcomes. Comments such as, 'The new headteacher and senior management team have re-energised the whole school' and 'Since the new head has taken over, I have noticed a real change in the way the school has been run and on the focus on learning,' indicate how

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positively parents and carers regard the new appointment. Staff morale is high, and all share the leaderships' high expectations of how to improve provision. Self-evaluation is accurate, and leaders have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff accountability is improving through meetings that take place to discuss pupils' progress. Target setting is now challenging and systems to identify and tackle any underachievement are working well. These measures have secured good progress in Year 6 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Though progress is not yet consistently good in other year groups, there are positive signs that senior leaders are beginning to turn this around.

The governing body is supportive and members are visible in the school. However, in the past it has not focused sufficiently well on attainment and progress. Also it has not checked carefully enough that the key issues identified in the previous inspection regarding weaknesses in teaching and in the marking of pupils' work have been resolved. However, the rapid improvements made since the new headteacher's appointment, including rising attainment in English and mathematics in Year 6, an increasing proportion of good teaching and the willingness of staff to improve, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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 the progress of pupils throughout the school by:
  - ensuring teachers make effective use of assessment information so that the majority of pupils make at least the expected amount of progress each year
  - setting challenging end-of-year targets for all pupils to ensure their progress is consistent year-on-year
  - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects
  - strengthening the role of the governing body in the monitoring and evaluating of pupils' performance.
- Improve the quality of marking and pupils' presentation skills by:
  - ensuring marking clearly identifies how pupils can improve their work, and teachers provide them with time to respond to the feedback given
  - ensuring marking picks up errors in pupils' basic skills
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation, handwriting and spelling skills.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the diversity in British society by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to interact with others from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds that are representative of the different groups within the United Kingdom

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- regularly monitoring and evaluating the impact of these opportunities on pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

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

**3**

All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning, and their achievement is satisfactory. The progress of boys has accelerated recently due to the use of visual literacy which engages their interests. Observations show they make the same progress as girls. Most pupils are interested in lessons and work steadily on the tasks given. Their behaviour is good and this helps them to concentrate. When activities capture their interest, their engagement is deeper and assures very good gains in knowledge and understanding. In one outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils considered carefully the 'story' of a line graph and what it told them about the use of electricity over-time. This lesson very effectively helped to develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. In another outstanding English lesson, Year 4 pupils developed a very good understanding of how to plan and organise an explanation text. However, sometimes pupils find their work either too hard or too easy and this slows their progress.

Pupils are confident that the rare cases of bullying will be quickly resolved. They know how to keep themselves and others safe. They do their best to eat a healthy diet, and take plenty of exercise, and this is reflected in the school's national recognition in this area. Pupils are keen to take responsibility. For example, the school council regularly passes its views to the governors. Pupils are often involved in local community projects and fund-raising activities. Positive attitudes and average standards in basic skills mean pupils' preparation for secondary school and future work is satisfactory. Attendance is above average. Strong links with the local church increases pupils' awareness of religious concepts, and reinforces the school's values. They reflect maturely on their own feelings and those of others, for example during assemblies. These opportunities contribute effectively to pupils' good overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their knowledge and understanding of social and cultural diversity is more limited.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Good behaviour means minimum time is wasted during lessons, and pupils try hard to complete their work. They answer questions willingly, and all staff effectively use different strategies to involve pupils in their lessons. 'Talk partners' are proving successful as pupils share ideas and learn from each other. In the very best lessons, pupils make good or even outstanding progress because assessment information is used well to guide planning. Good questioning is used to extend pupils' thinking. When lessons are only satisfactory this is because the work planned is not pitched at the correct level and progress slows because the tasks do not offer enough challenge. Also, the overuse of worksheets in 'topic work' means pupils do not have the opportunity to plan and organise their own learning, and to practise their literacy skills. Although there is some good marking practice, this is not consistent throughout the school. Teaching assistants are generally deployed well and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities sensitively. However, at times they intervene too quickly, so restricting pupils' independence. The satisfactory curriculum meets all statutory requirements and a range of visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum effectively.

The school takes good care of its pupils and this is reflected in the good relationships they enjoy with the staff. Routines are clearly established and these ensure that pupils are kept safe and that the school is an orderly and calm environment. Parents and carers also agree their children are kept safe. Clearly targeted support for pupils facing challenging

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circumstances is of good quality. The provision of the popular breakfast club 'Earlybirds' is appreciated by working parents and carers, and provides pupils with a healthy and happy start to the school day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher provides the school with a firm steer, giving it a clarity of purpose and direction that is accelerating pupils' progress and improving their attainment. Senior leaders accurately monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and the initial impact of initiatives on pupils' progress. Secure systems have been introduced to support teachers in improving their teaching skills. The headteacher's vision for improvement is shared by staff and the governing body. However, it is early days, and as yet, there has been insufficient time to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better in order to ensure good learning and progress. The governing body is supportive but its role in challenging the school to do better is underdeveloped. Policies and procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and all staff are suitably trained and well informed on all issues relating to child protection.

Relationships with parents are good. They are kept well informed about their children's progress and the general work of the school. The partnerships with local schools and services contribute to pupils' sound achievements, for instance sports development and modern foreign languages. The school ensures that no pupil misses out on experiences offered, discrimination is not tolerated and statutory duties fulfilled. The promotion of equal opportunities is, nevertheless, satisfactory because progress is variable as pupils move through the school. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. It is actively promoted in the local community and there are some useful links established internationally. The leadership is aware that more should be done to promote understanding of the national context.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Effective induction arrangements help children to settle happily into everyday routines and to thrive in a warm and supportive environment. Behaviour is good. As a result, children quickly become confident, independent learners and progress is good. In the past, attainment at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage has been average. However, because of improved provision, children currently in Reception are on track to attain above average standards of work. Teaching and learning are good although occasionally activities are too adult-directed and children do not have sufficient opportunity to make choices and select activities for themselves. The leadership effectively ensures staff work very closely together as a team, and a joint approach to planning, using careful observations of each child ensures the right activities are available in both the indoor and outdoor environments. Weaknesses in learning are quickly identified and rigorous action taken. This is seen in the improved progress of boys' writing skills. The children's 'I can' folders provide an effective link between home and school, and parents and carers are appreciative of the work of this key stage. Welfare requirements are fully in place and there are appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that children are safe and well cared for.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

An above average proportion of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Almost all of them are pleased with their children's experience of school. They state their children enjoy school, are kept safe and the school helps their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. They think they are kept well informed about their children's progress and leadership and management are effective. A very small minority feel inappropriate behaviour is not managed well. During the inspection no inappropriate behaviour was observed, and the behaviour of pupils was evaluated as good. Good relationships ensured the effective management of behaviour during lesson observations.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ruskington Chestnut Street C of E 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 146 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 366 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	60	56	38	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	94	64	51	35	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	71	49	73	50	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	77	53	61	42	6	4	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	75	51	66	45	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	47	67	46	7	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	47	72	49	3	2	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)	56	38	72	49	5	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	47	70	48	6	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	44	63	43	10	7	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	42	71	49	8	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	61	42	82	56	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	55	59	40	5	3	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

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



28 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ruskington Chestnut Street CofE Primary School, Sleaford, NG34 9DL**

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. We think you receive a satisfactory education which means there are some good things and some things that need to be improved. We agree with you when you say adults at school look after you well, so that you are safe and happy. Your behaviour is good and this is a real help to your teachers because there are no distractions in lessons. We were pleased to find you know the importance of eating sensibly and of taking regular exercise. You do lots to help others in school, by being members of the school council, safety officers and house captains. Although you do lots in the school and local communities we thought you need to learn more about, and work with, different communities in the United Kingdom.

You make good progress in Reception and satisfactory progress in other year groups to reach average standards at the end of Year 6. We think you could reach higher standards and make faster progress. So, we have asked your teachers to make sure that, in all of your lessons, they plan work that makes all of you think hard. Your teachers also spend a lot of time marking your work, and we have asked that when they do this they give you clear guidance on how to improve. Also, we have asked them to give you help in improving your handwriting spelling and presentation skills, as well as giving you lots of opportunities to practise your writing skills in other subjects.

Your headteacher, all the other staff and governors are determined to make things even better. To help with this, we have asked that governors are more closely involved in checking you are all learning as fast as you can. All of you can help by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and supporting your classmates. You can also remind your teachers to give you time to read, and follow up the useful comments they make in your books. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness

Lead inspector

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