

The Sibsey Free Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120628
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380078
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Hutson
Headteacher	Phillip Coote
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons, taught by six teachers. Parts of six other lessons were also observed. Inspectors held meetings with senior members of staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils. They also looked at the school's records about pupils' attainment and progress, school development and improvement plans, self-evaluation and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also took account of the views expressed by parents and carers in 68 inspection questionnaires and those expressed by pupils and members of staff.

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

- How well does the school establish the basic skills of literacy and numeracy with the youngest children?
- How effective are the school's strategies to improve the proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels in English and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6?
- How well does the school evaluate the success of initiatives for improvement in terms of their impact on pupils' attainment and progress?

Information about the school

Sibsey Free is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with very few who speak English as an additional language. The school holds a number of awards in recognition of its work, including a British Educational Communications and Technology Agency Award, Healthy School status, a Basic Skills Quality Mark, Football Association Chartermark, Activemark and Eco Schools Silver Award.

Onsite childcare provision consists of breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs. The governing body does not manage this provision, which is inspected separately.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Sibsey Free School is a good school in which pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment in English and mathematics is above average. The school is very much at the heart of the community it serves. The majority of parents and carers and pupils have very positive views and are pleased with the quality of education the school provides. As one parent commented, reflecting the views of many, 'I feel incredibly lucky to have such a fantastic school on my doorstep, which offers my children a great start in life.' The care, guidance and support the school provides are outstanding, including the arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe. The school is also exceptionally effective in the promotion of equality of opportunity and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. This results in pupils feeling valued and able to do their best.

Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants make an effective contribution to introducing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy that are essential for the youngest children and underpin their future good progress. The introduction of strategies to increase the proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels in English and mathematics has resulted in steady but clear improvements in attainment over the last three years. However, attainment in English, and writing in particular, has tended to lag behind that in mathematics. Pupils are proud of their achievements. Their behaviour is excellent and they respond with great enthusiasm to the challenges set for them during lessons. The majority of pupils are eager to answer questions and participate in the discussions. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills by including them in extended questioning and ensuring they can contribute to discussions. The ability of older pupils to undertake extended writing is improving well. However, the younger pupils' understanding of how letter and word sounds lead to correctly structured sentences, and subsequent extended writing, is not always sufficiently coherent.

Many good features are evident in the way the school is led and managed. Pupils' attainment and progress are assessed accurately. The information provided by these assessments is analysed closely and used effectively to set out ways in which further improvement can be promoted. The impact of all strategies for improvement is then analysed in terms of their direct effect on pupils' attainment and progress. The close working partnerships forged with other schools also have a significant positive effect on pupils' attainment, progress and personal development.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is also good. This is illustrated by

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the success of actions taken to improve attainment and by the way in which the school has addressed the relative weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. For example, the provision for outdoor play for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much improved. A clear plan for the promotion of community cohesion has been implemented and evaluated, and as a result community cohesion is now outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels in English, and particularly in writing, by:
 - extending pupils' speaking and listening skills through the consistent use of precise and sophisticated questioning that extends their analytical and thinking skills
 - consolidating the understanding of younger pupils about the links between letter and word sounds, writing sentences and extended writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy their learning. Children join the school with skills and understanding that are now broadly at the levels expected for their age, and their good progress throughout the school was affirmed by the work seen in their books and the lessons observed during the inspection. The attainment seen in English and mathematics in Year 6 was above average, although still weaker in writing. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their various starting points. This is because they receive good support from teachers and from teaching assistants, particularly when working in small groups on tasks that are well suited to their individual needs.

The extent to which pupils feel safe is outstanding, and this is affirmed by the views expressed by their parents and carers. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, who apply themselves exceptionally well and are very supportive of each other. Pupils enjoy the frequent opportunities provided for them to take exercise. They understand the importance of having a healthy diet and the school provides fruit for each pupil every day. Even so, some pupils come to school with packed lunches that do not contain entirely healthy food products.

The relatively new 'Pupil Voice' group enables pupils' views to be heard and extends their influence about what happens in school. Pupils are proud of their school. They take responsibility and readily help adults and their fellow pupils in whatever ways they can. They contribute well to school and community events and have good insights into the lives and beliefs of people in other parts of Britain and from around the world. Pupils proudly take part in the annual community pantomime. They presented the story of their school at a pupil conference attended by many other schools in the area. They have visited schools that have high proportions of pupils from Eastern Europe. They also provide funding to support the education of a child in

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the Gambia. Attendance is above average and pupils acquire the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology well. These skills, combined with pupils’ good ability to work hard and help each other, mean they are well prepared for the next stages of their education and later life.

Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They care for each other, take time to reflect on the impact of their actions and enjoy such activities as art, drama, music and writing.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are well versed in using assessment information to plan subsequent stages of pupils’ learning. For their part, pupils are involved well in assessment activities, including opportunities to self-assess and to set their own targets. Because of this they are clear about what they need to do to make their work even better.

Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils and celebrate their successes, helping them to be consistently well motivated. Lessons are planned imaginatively and often capture pupils’ interest and enthusiasm. During the inspection one lesson was interrupted by the arrival of a highly convincing ‘shipwrecked sailor’. This event proved to be an excellent stimulus for pupils’ writing. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively to younger pupils, although there are times when letter and word sounds are not connected closely enough to helping pupils to write sentences, or to the transfer of sentences into more extended writing. For older

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

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pupils the impact of the school’s thoughtful approach to teaching extended writing is paying dividends. Even so, there are times when teachers do not target questions precisely enough to fully extend pupils’ analytical and thinking skills. This applies particularly to questions aimed at the most-able pupils.

The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of interesting activities that support their learning well. Significant attention is given to pupils’ personal development to underpin the good progress they make. The current improvements in pupils’ writing are supported by opportunities to write in a range of subjects, such as science and history. When pupils do this they apply their skills well. Pupils’ learning benefits from educational visits, including a residential visit to Derbyshire for older pupils and trips to the National Portrait Gallery and Science Museum. Pupils also appreciate the good range of additional sporting and cultural activities that the school provides.

The provision of high quality care, guidance and support is central to pupils’ development. Their personal and pastoral needs are well known to all staff and met exceptionally well. Pupils feel valued and express great confidence in the support that adults provide. This confidence extends to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who, because of their circumstances, may at times be potentially at risk. In this context communication with parents and carers is also excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governing body all make an effective contribution to promoting improvement. They have good procedures for evaluating the school’s performance across all aspects of its work. The analysis of data about pupils’ attainment and progress is thorough and provides the basis for setting suitably challenging targets for attainment and for school improvement. This detailed analysis underpins the school’s commitment to ensure that all pupils are treated equally, and as a result, there are no significant gaps in achievement between different groups. The governing body and staff also work tirelessly to make certain that no pupil is discriminated against in any way, helping them to thrive and make strong progress in their personal development. Teaching and learning are also managed well, including the ongoing professional development of all staff. For example, the school has played a prominent part in trialling training materials for teaching assistants.

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The governing body is very supportive and increasingly knowledgeable about the work of the school. It is taking an increasingly proactive role in evaluative activities and, as a consequence, is less reliant on information coming directly from the headteacher. Communication with parents and carers about their children’s progress and about school activities is good, although a small number would like even more information. Partnerships to promote pupils’ learning and well-being are exceptionally effective. These partnerships also play a crucial part in the school’s outstanding safeguarding policies and procedures, which are highly rigorous and far exceed national requirements. The school has strong links with others and plays a prominent role in the Boston Network Learning Community. It also provides adult and family learning courses for the immediate community.

The promotion of community cohesion has improved markedly. In formulating its plans the governing body held meetings with a wide range of stakeholders from across the community. The result is a school in which pupils have a very well-established understanding of communities that are different from their own and are very aware of the challenges faced by people in the wider world. Involvement in the ‘personal histories’ project provided pupils with an excellent insight into the nature and evolution of their local community. Resources are used wisely and the school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The skills and knowledge of children when they start in the Reception class are close to those expected for their age. This was not always the case. In previous years skills and knowledge have often been below the expected level. Improvements have taken

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place in part because of the close liaison and support provided by the school for local pre-school groups. This means that children are prepared well for starting in Reception and settle in quickly. During their time in the Reception class children make good progress in all areas of their learning. By the time they are ready to join Year 1 the skills and knowledge of a significant proportion are above average.

Teaching and leadership and management are good. All areas of children’s learning are addressed effectively. Their progress is assessed accurately and activities are adapted to match the stage that children have reached. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those in which children can make their own choices. As a result, children’s behaviour is excellent; they sustain their interest and become suitably independent. They also work well together in partnerships and small groups. Children are confident and eager to explain what they are doing. Important early communication and numeracy skills are developing well, although there are occasions when teachers and teaching assistants do not challenge children sufficiently with their questions; particularly the most-able. The outdoor environment is used effectively to promote children’s learning with significant improvements evident since the time of the school’s last inspection.

Children’s personal development and their safety are given a high profile at all times. Links with parents and carers are strong. During the inspection some parents and carers helped the children to bake bread. The children embraced this opportunity with enthusiasm, typifying their enjoyment and approach to learning.

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 of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are very happy with the quality of education provided for their children and the progress they are making. A very small minority of parents and carers think the school does not deal effectively with instances of unacceptable behaviour. However, during the inspection pupils’ behaviour and their application to learning during lessons was excellent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Sibsey Free 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	78	14	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	76	13	19	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	30	44	35	51	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	51	29	43	1	1	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	32	47	31	46	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	46	34	50	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	43	32	47	1	1	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)	29	43	33	49	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	36	53	26	38	4	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	40	33	49	6	9	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	46	31	46	5	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	62	22	32	4	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	45	66	20	29	2	3	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



13 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Sibsey Free Primary School, Boston, PE22 0RR

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank those of you who gave their time to talk with us during the recent inspection of your school. We agree with you and many of your parents and carers that Sibsey Free is a good school.

Yours is a school in which learning is interesting and enjoyable and the adults take outstanding care of you. You get off to a good start in the Reception class. Your headteacher, teachers and the teaching assistants do all they can to make sure you all make good progress.

We think your behaviour and the ways in which you work hard during lessons are outstanding. This is a key factor in enabling you to do well, and we know that by the time you leave at the end of Year 6 your attainment in English and mathematics is higher than found in many other schools. Even so, we were very aware that all the adults, under the leadership and guidance of your headteacher, are always looking for ways to make your school even better. With that in mind we have asked them to:

- make sure that the questions they pose for you in lessons are always challenging enough to make you think hard and test your analytical knowledge and skills
- reinforce your understanding of how letter and word sounds provide the foundation for you to write sentences and more extended pieces of writing - this is especially important for the younger pupils among you.

You can help by continuing to work hard and maintaining your excellent behaviour.

I would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft
Lead inspector

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