



St Nicholas' Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118050
LEA Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number 280226
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs June Tracey

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cottingham Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Hull
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		HU6 7RH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01482 444215
Number on roll	174	Fax number	01482 494453
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Pat Longney
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Miss Beryl Turner

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Nicholas' is a smaller than average size voluntary aided Primary school. Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds within a wide catchment area in the city of Hull. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children join the Reception class from a significant number of pre-school groups. Overall, attainment on entry is below average. The school's historical link with the Sailors Families Society, a charity looking after vulnerable children, has promoted its reputation for caring for such children. In the near future, the school expects to become a community school working under the auspices of Hull Local Authority. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds; some are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a unique and caring good school that caters well for its pupils by building on the best of its historical traditions and adapting them to a twenty-first century education. It provides good value for money. Some features of the school's work are outstanding, such as the care, support and guidance and the strong partnerships that contribute so well to pupils' well-being and good personal development. The school is accurate in its assessment of itself as a good school. Parents think so too, as shown in their responses to the questionnaire. One written comment simply said, 'My child absolutely loves school', which epitomises the enjoyment that was seen throughout the inspection. Overall, teaching is good, so pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well and make good progress. They get off to a good start in the Reception class where the work stimulates young minds. In Key Stage 1, progress is satisfactory rather than good because pupils do not always build quickly enough on their prior learning in the Reception class. This is because teachers do not always check pupils' progress effectively at regular intervals to ensure that they are learning at a quick enough pace. Standards in Year 6 fluctuate from year to year but are generally above average, and accurately reflect the range of abilities in the particular age group. The school has recently embarked on a good programme of intensive support for reading and writing. This has raised standards further in literacy and has had a 'knock-on' effect in numeracy. The marking policy for pupils' work is relatively new; it is not yet applied consistently throughout the school and slows down the progress that some pupils make because they do not know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.

The school is well led and managed, contributing to pupils' confidence in it to provide the learning opportunities that will open doors to the future. Subject leaders play a key role in coordinating activities. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection and there is the capacity for still more.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the challenge in Key Stage 1 by checking pupils' progress at regular intervals to ensure that they are moving on quickly enough.
- Embed the marking policy in the school's systems so that pupils in all year groups know how well they are achieving and exactly what they need to do to improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. From below average attainment on entry to the Reception class, children make good progress to reach standards that are similar to those expected in the main areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Progress is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1, leading to standards that are broadly average for pupils' age by the end of Year 2. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6; expectations are

high and pupils achieve well to reach the challenging targets set for them. These vary from year to year in accordance with the varying proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in each age group. At best, such as in 2004, standards were significantly above the national average. Pupils' performance in national tests in Year 6 was below average in 2005. Results for 2006 are similar to those of 2004; they exceed the school's targets for English and mathematics at both the nationally expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. The adoption of the local authority's Intensive Support Programme has had a significant impact on pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing in Years 3 to 6. There is scope for further improvement in standards in Years 1 and 2. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress throughout the school because of the well-targeted, individual support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. The school considers it to be outstanding, which it is in many, but not all, aspects. The inspectors' judgement takes into account that pupils in Key Stage 1 do not make quite as much progress as they could in their academic work. Parents are very happy with the school and are confident that it provides a safe environment where their children feel safe. Pupils trust the adults in the school and say that there is always someone to turn to in times of need. They appreciate being able to express their views through the school council. Pupils enjoy school and speak in glowing terms of the excitement each day brings. For example, a recent educational visit provoked sensitive discussion amongst older pupils about the pros and cons of warfare and its far-reaching impact. Pupils' speaking and listening, mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing progressively, preparing them well for future education and adult life. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities integrate extremely well and their contributions to school life are valued by other pupils. This was exemplified in a pupil's comment, 'We have a special person in our class. We treat them just the same as us.'

Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They understand the boundaries and know what to expect if these are not observed. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; there is a decisive emphasis on how to live and work together in communities. Attendance is broadly average. The school is working hard to promote pupils' awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Some pupils have not yet adjusted to this fully in their everyday thinking and actions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 where the pace and challenge in lessons are demanding and consistent. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1; at times, the learning in this key stage does not build quickly enough on pupils' previous learning. Teachers have responded well to training linked to the Intensive Support Programme. This has led to the trial of new practices and more pertinent use of information gained from assessment. As a result, pupils benefit from a rapid response to identified weaknesses or inadequate progress. This has been particularly helpful in ensuring that pupils reach the level expected for their age. The school has identified the need for greater consistency in the marking of pupils' work. A new system, worked out and agreed by the staff, is beginning to have an impact. Pupils like it because it gives them a clearer picture of their progress and what to do to improve further.

Teachers work closely and productively with teaching assistants; work schedules are interwoven seamlessly so pupils who need additional support, for any reason, never lose touch with the work of the main class. Teachers manage behaviour well by encouraging pupils' respect for each other and creating calm learning environments. Their good subject knowledge stimulates pupils' enthusiasm and makes them want to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is evolving in the true spirit of excellence and enjoyment. The school has an innovative and creative approach that encompasses experiences from beyond the classroom. For example, the recent whole-school visit to a World War 2 theme museum was carefully planned so that preparatory and subsequent work met specific curricular objectives for each year group. Hence, pupils extracted maximum learning from the activity. Pupils are encouraged to work and think across subject boundaries, for example, in the Year 5 English lesson in which they were asked to examine their consciences before making a critical decision about a complex moral issue in a story. Music is an outstanding feature of the school's work, both in lessons and specialist instrumental work. The choir and orchestra are well attended and pupils get tremendous enjoyment and satisfaction from their progress, achievement and performances for the public. Apart from music, the school provides a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. These are popular; there is something to appeal to every pupil.

Provision for ICT has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Technical skills are taught systematically and pupils are confident to use them independently. Assessment procedures are not yet fully in place, however, to track the progress of individual pupils in ICT.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The headteacher and staff know the children and families as individuals and use the knowledge exceptionally well to encourage pupils to extend themselves in academic and leisure activities. The high level of commitment from all staff, for all pupils, is evident in the school's ethos and the pupils' response to it. It leads to pupils' care and consideration for each other and to each feeling valued. Numerous written comments on the parents' questionnaires referred to the exceptional level of support that made pupils feel part of a school family that extended deep into the local community and beyond. One parent's concluding words, 'I thank and congratulate the headteacher and staff on what they achieve every day' were a fitting summary of the views of other parents.

The school has a substantial number of potentially vulnerable pupils. Each receives unobtrusive support that enables them to work comfortably with their peers. The school has developed its own highly effective programme to assist pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. These pupils quickly learn to communicate with other pupils, helping them to form relationships, which, in turn, aid their learning and attitudes towards it. Playtimes are wonderful social events. Pupils explore the extensive grounds and make excellent use of a vast range of equipment that challenges their imagination and develops physical stamina. Child protection, risk procedures and health and safety issues are robust. Adults providing support in the school are well trained. They work well in partnership with parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher's vision for the school, wholly supported by the staff and governors, seeks to benefit the pupils and the community at large. The school is proactive in searching out opportunities to enhance pupils' learning and in activating initiatives. Management is entrepreneurial. Teachers and other adults have a strong allegiance to the school, which is cascaded down to pupils. The school's self-evaluation incorporates the views of all who share in the school's life, as providers or learners. It identifies accurately the areas for development. Thoughtful investment, targeted at priorities identified through monitoring and evaluation of performance, contributes to the outstanding care for pupils and the good value for money judgement. Teachers are well supported in their professional development through a good system of training and workshops that are directly linked to pupils' immediate needs.

The school has coped successfully with the challenges presented by the pending sale of the site by its owners, the Sailors Families Society. Teachers have been adaptable, for example, to small class groups in Years 5 and 6. Governors support the school well. They make well informed decisions based on sound knowledge of the school's performance and how it operates.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection and has the capacity to improve still further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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To the pupils of:

St Nicholas' Primary School

Cottingham Road

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5 July 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school this week. It was a pleasure to talk to you. You clearly enjoy coming to school.

We were very impressed with the way you work together and look after each other. You behave well and understand how important it is to have a calm atmosphere in your classrooms. This helps you to concentrate and enables your teachers to work with you individually or in groups. We were pleased to hear how much you value the opportunity to make your views known through the school council. This helps you to understand about being a good citizen and how you will be able to contribute to your community when you are older. Other things about the school that we thought were really good were:

your enthusiasm and active participation in the many activities provided for you outside lessons
the way you build up friendships by talking and playing together well at playtimes
the way most of you are patient when listening to each other in class discussions
your confidence in the school to help you if you need someone to talk to when you have a problem.

Your teachers are keen to see that you achieve as well as you possibly can. To help with this, we have asked your teachers to apply the same marking system to your written work in all classes. This means that you will be able to follow your own progress during the year and talk to your teacher about how to improve further. We have also asked your school to help you to work faster in Key Stage 1 so that you can build on your good learning in the Reception class.

The pride you have in belonging to the school reflects the effort you and your teachers put into making it a lively and vibrant community. Well done.

Best wishes to you all for a successful future,

June Tracey

(Lead inspector)