



Deeping St Nicholas Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 120407
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280807
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 28 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Geof Timms AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Main Road
School category	Community		PE11 3DG
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01775630280
Number on roll	67	Fax number	01775630280
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.A. Ivatt
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Anita Bandey

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School is much smaller than most primary schools but is expanding and has recently increased the number of classes to three. Each cohort of children is between seven and 12, making it difficult to compare accurately the test results from year to year. Cohorts are also disrupted by above average levels of children entering or leaving the school at times other than normal. Most children come from average or below average socio-economic backgrounds. There are few children from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average, although there is an above average proportion of children with statements of special educational need entitling them to extra support. The overall picture of attainment on entry to the school is that it is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School offers its pupils a satisfactory education, with a number of good and improving features that are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. This assessment matches the school's self-evaluation and takes account of recent staffing difficulties and changes to the organisation of the school. When its size is taken into account, alongside the available budget, the school provides good value for money. Children enter the school with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for their age and there are very few children who are above average. The school's own assessments show that although there is good provision and children make good progress, standards by the end of Reception are still below those expected for their age. Achievement throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory and improving. The teaching is satisfactory overall and has good features that are helping to improve pupils' learning and raise standards. The headteacher provides good leadership and staff work very hard to provide an appropriate and up-to-date curriculum suitable for the mixed-age classes. Current standards are broadly average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Within this improving picture, it is clear that the school needs to raise standards further in mathematics, especially in trying to help more pupils attain the higher levels and to solve problems, and in aspects of writing, including spelling. However, in science the number of pupils reaching the higher levels is better than that found nationally and this reflects action taken since the last inspection. The school has recently introduced new systems to set targets for pupils and share in more depth how they can improve. These are not used consistently and effectively enough yet to have the desired impact on standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities often make good progress due to the effective support they receive. The school is making outstanding efforts to raise pupils' aspirations and prepare them for their future economic well-being. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. However, recent changes have yet to be fully reflected in standards at the end of Year 6. These improvements, together with rising standards, show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help more pupils to reach the higher levels in mathematics through developing their problem-solving skills and ensuring that teaching provides sufficient challenge
- Raise standards in writing and spelling by reviewing strategies and approaches and improving pupils' motivation.
- Improve the use of target setting to help pupils understand exactly what is expected of them and how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is currently satisfactory. Overall, standards are rising. Children enter the school with well below average knowledge and skills. In the Reception year children

make good progress but few attain all of the expected learning goals. The current Year 2 pupils have also made good progress when compared to their attainment on entry to the school although none has yet reached the higher levels. The current Year 6 looks likely to achieve higher standards than previous years in English and especially in science, where a well above average number has achieved the higher levels. In mathematics, although an average number reached the expected level, no pupils reached the higher levels, compared to the 30% who do so nationally. This was also the case last year, and the school is aware it needs to do more to help those pupils to achieve better standards. In writing, the school has recognised that standards need improving, especially in spelling. Even so, these results represent satisfactory progress by those pupils who have been in the school for a significant length of time. The number of pupils reaching the expected level exceeded the school's challenging targets, but fewer pupils than expected reached the higher levels. However, given the very small numbers of more able pupils on entry to the school, this still represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and often achieve well. There is a good standard of work in art and design throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school has a positive and supportive ethos. The pupils are happy and most enjoy their work and play. However, parents do not always support the school sufficiently in encouraging high aspirations for their children. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is sound. Behaviour is satisfactory in most lessons and around the school, and pupils say there is little bullying although there has been in the past. They are confident that they are well prepared for secondary school. Attendance is consistently below average but improving and the school works hard to encourage regular attendance. Pupils have good opportunities to work together, and learn to cooperate and collaborate on tasks. The use of the 'Respect Tree' helps create an ethos of celebration where adults can comment on pupils' specific positive actions. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils have excellent opportunities to meet and talk to a range of adults from different backgrounds and careers as a way of developing their aspirations and helping improve their future economic well-being. The school works hard to teach pupils the basic skills of literacy numeracy and to make good use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and how and why they should lead healthy lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and there are good aspects that are reflected in the rising standards. The marking of pupils' work helps them understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Where the teaching can be

improved is through more consistent and effective use of target setting, helping pupils understand what is expected of them at the start of lessons and how well they have achieved the objectives by the end. The relationships between adults and pupils are good. Teaching assistants often provide good support, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, although there are times when they are not deployed efficiently. Teachers' questioning skills are good and help pupils think through what they are doing and how they have arrived at answers. Teachers assess pupils' work well. However, the use of target setting to help pupils know what they should be achieving is inconsistent between classes. There are times when teachers do not match the work well enough to pupils' prior learning and it is too easy for them. Teachers are using the interactive whiteboards and other ICT well to make lessons interesting for pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and appropriately planned given the need to teach pupils in mixed age classes. The curriculum for the Reception children is well-planned and appropriate for effective early learning. A very positive initiative has been the links with a sports coordinator at a local secondary school. This has resulted in improved provision through better subject knowledge and understanding, better resources and a more effective curriculum. The school has good plans in place improve learning by creating more effective links between subjects in line with the expected national changes to the curriculum and particularly the literacy and numeracy strategies. Teachers work hard to provide some enrichment to pupils' learning. There are some sporting or musical activities after school, and the school takes pupils on a range of visits locally, usually closely tied to their current work

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care guidance and support for the pupils. The arrangements for keeping children safe are good and the staff take good account of the dangers of the main road when children arrive and leave. Child protection procedures are clearly understood by staff. Statutory requirements for staff security checks are being met and health and safety risk assessments are carried out regularly, especially for the visits and trips. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at school and comfortable in approaching staff if they have a concern. There is a good level of supervision at lunchtime. The school has good systems for tracking pupils' progress and these systems are beginning to have an evident benefit in the rising standards. Pupils have targets, particularly in English and mathematics, but the use of these is inconsistent. There are excellent induction arrangements for the new Reception children, giving them very good opportunities to experience life in the class and to get to know the other children even before they start school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management is satisfactory but improving, and with some significant strengths. The headteacher provides good leadership and she has a clear focus on the need to raise standards further. Taking part in a leadership project with staff from other small schools has helped her share strengths and identify ways to improve the school. Together with the staff, she works very hard to ensure the school is effective in helping provide a sound education and to prepare the pupils for secondary school. The impact of this is now evident in the rising standards. The staff share the responsibility for leading subjects well, and they work hard together to recognise strengths and address weaknesses. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. The self-evaluation is honest and accurate, and has recognised appropriate priorities for improving standards. Parents' views about the school are very positive, and their opinions have been sought and acted upon over time. Systems for taking account of pupils' views are less well developed but there are plans to improve such opportunities. The governing body is very supportive of the school and they appreciate the hard work required for success in such a small school. The headteacher has recently introduced an effective and efficient method for using governors' time well when carrying out their work. However, their monitoring arrangements are very informal and not effective enough yet in holding the school to account. The range of improvements made over recent years to teaching, the curriculum and resources, is beginning to be reflected in achievement and shows that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	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	3	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

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited. I particularly enjoyed talking with you, especially those of you in Year 6 who met me and who told me a lot about the things you like doing at school and those things you would like to do more of. This letter is to tell you about some of the important things I saw and found out during my visit. Your parents are very happy with your school, and you told me you are happy there as well. You said you feel safe in school and that there is no bullying or racism. The youngest children have an excellent start to school, and they work and play well in the Reception year. You told me that the teachers help you to learn and their marking helps you understand what you have to do to make your work better. I think the setting of targets for you is a good idea and the teachers need to improve this system further. The school tries hard to get you to want to be successful when you are older. The excellent opportunities you have to meet people from different jobs are really helpful in this. You behave well most of the time and this helps the teachers help you to learn. You are getting better test results now than has been the case in the past. This helps prepare you well for secondary school. You are lucky because Mrs Bandey, the teachers and other adults, all look after and care for you very well. They encourage you to be healthy and stay safe, and are working very hard to ensure that you learn new things and to make the school even better in the future. They can do this by helping you improve your work, especially in mathematics and in writing and spelling. You are lucky to be at such a friendly school. Keep working hard and enjoy your time at Deeping St Nicholas!