



Grantham Spitalgate CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120523
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280834
Inspection dates 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Joanne Harvey LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Trent Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		NG31 7XQ
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01476 563963
Number on roll	174	Fax number	01476 573162
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Denise Holt
Date of previous inspection	18 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Neil Spencelayh

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average voluntary controlled CofE primary school serving the Earlesfield estate in Grantham, an area of high social deprivation. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than in most schools. Pupils enter the school with levels of knowledge and skills which are well below those expected for their age. The school has a proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and with statements of special educational needs. The majority of pupils are White British and for most their first language is English. Spitalgate has a very high number of pupils who start and leave school other than at the normal time. It is working for Children's Centre Status and received The Healthy Schools award in July 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that overall effectiveness is satisfactory, though there are good and developing features. Some of these improvements have not yet made a difference to the standards that pupils reach in national tests. The school takes good care of its pupils. Parents speak well of the school and pupils are very happy here. The curriculum is stimulating and interesting. Because of this, pupils have good attitudes to their work, behave well and are ready and willing to learn. Pupils' progress at the time of the inspection was good and the school is working to make it even better by ensuring that pupil targets are used consistently. Attendance is improving and at the time of the inspection was close to the national average. The head teacher has provided outstanding leadership, having taken over when the school was facing very challenging circumstances. He has been ably supported by senior staff and a hardworking team to put systems in place which have quickly transformed the learning environment, improved the quality of teaching and helped pupils to make good progress. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is now satisfactory with some good features. Standards are well below average in Key Stage 1 and below average in Key Stage 2 where there have been improvements for the last two years. However, there is evidence which indicates that the school is continuing to raise standards and pupils are on track to do better in future national tests and across the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has demonstrated its capacity to improve further. This is a rapidly improving school that offers very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in national tests for all pupils in line with the progress currently being made in school.
- Continue to work with parents to further improve attendance.
- Ensure all pupils know and understand their targets and next steps in learning in order to further raise standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter the Nursery with levels of knowledge and skills which are well below those of most children nationally. They make satisfactory progress but when they start Year 1 standards are still below average. In the 2005 Key Stage 1 tests, overall standards were well below those seen nationally. In the Key Stage 2 tests overall standards were below those seen nationally but have been rising steadily for the last two years. From the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 pupils made the expected amount of progress. However, at the time of the inspection, pupils were achieving well throughout school and the tracking of progress indicates standards at all Key Stages are improving. This is due to good teaching and the effective systems which have been put in place to help pupils do as well as they can. All pupils make similar progress, including those

with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are now consistently high expectations of all pupils who are set challenging targets and given support so that they achieve and sometimes exceed them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have positive attitudes to school, enjoy lessons and relate well to each other. Behaviour is good. Pupils play safely under the watchful eyes of adult supervisors at break times and participate enthusiastically in staff led games. They make healthy and safe choices. Moral and social development are good and no anti-social behaviour was seen during the inspection. Cultural and spiritual development are satisfactory with some opportunities for personal reflection. Attendance has been below average owing to high levels of unauthorised absence. Pupil mentors continue to bring about significant improvements by following up absences. Pupils know they can make positive differences through the school council. They instigated the modernisation of toilet facilities and their current project is to convert a cycle shed into an outdoor play base. Older pupils respond well to their prefect duties and therefore learn about community responsibility. By Year 6, pupils are able to work well in teams and partnership with others but gaps in their literacy and numeracy skills need to be addressed in order for them to be adequately prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons, pupils make good progress due to thorough planning, interesting content and confident teaching. Classrooms are attractive and well resourced. These lessons are well tailored to meet the different needs of pupils. Particularly good use is made of electronic whiteboards as teaching aids. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is developing well. Relationships between pupils and adults in lessons are very good, enabling pupils to feel secure and confident in their learning. Teaching assistants are well briefed and make valuable contributions to pupils' learning. In the small number of satisfactory lessons, tasks lack pace or fail to engage some pupils' attention sufficiently and consequently learning is slowed. Marking is not always evaluative. The policy for marking is good, but not consistently applied in all classes. Pupils are not always sure of their targets and how to achieve them. There is extremely thorough monitoring of pupils with additional learning or behavioural needs through the pastoral forum where teachers, support staff and pupil mentors discuss case histories in order to identify the best type of support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum provision is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. There is a strong emphasis on language and mathematical development as part of the school's drive to raise standards. The provision for ICT is much improved since the last inspection and is raising standards. The new computer suite is a valuable resource, as are the electronic whiteboards in all classrooms. The use of ICT in classrooms and to support learning across the curriculum is a current focus. Curriculum plans are flexible in order to meet the requirements of annually changing mixed age groupings but are rooted in a secure planning base and there are improving links between subjects. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. This contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. They develop a good understanding of safe and healthy living. Their work to achieve the Healthy Schools Award has supported this well. The curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors making lessons more relevant as well as by a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. The school's registration as a Young Enterprise Centre enables pupils to work on community issues with local business managers enhancing their future workplace skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Levels of care, support and guidance for pupils are good. Family and pupil welfare is a key feature and strength of the school's work. Pastoral support for the high number of those with significant emotional needs is of exceptional quality. Good systems and guidance, including child protection, enable pupils to stay safe and be happy. Extensive pupil data is used to set pupils' individual curriculum targets in reading, writing and numeracy but not all pupils fully understand them. Pupils with specific learning needs are well supported and make good progress. Education plans for these pupils are of good quality and parents and children are increasingly involved in their formation. School staff work well with parents to provide support for pupils' academic and social development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. An outstanding feature has been the leadership of the head teacher. He has a clear vision for the school and in two years has been successful in building a strong and committed staff team united behind the school ethos, 'Together Everyone Achieves More'. Staff have worked tirelessly in challenging circumstances to improve the quality of education provided for every pupil in the school. Because of their robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work, the head teacher and senior managers have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas it needs to develop. Plans for improvement have been put in place in a focussed way. Therefore changes have been quick to take effect and progress has been good. For example, effective systems have been introduced to

monitor the quality of teaching, for tracking pupils' progress and ensuring high levels of care. These have quickly improved the quality of pupils' learning, the standards reached, the progress pupils make and in promoting good personal and social development. Many subject leaders are having a positive impact on provision in their areas. The work of a few is still developing. Monitoring systems enable rigorous tracking of pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and science but the same cannot be said of other subjects. There have been considerable improvements to the learning environment including the modernisation and improved organisation of teaching areas and library. Pupils benefit from the active approach leaders take to securing additional funding. They also benefit from the positive and effective relationships that the school promotes with other agencies. The governing body is relatively newly established. Governors receive a good quality and range of information about the school and their support in school is valued. They are developing their view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and their role as critical friend to the head teacher. Parents and pupils are happy that the school values their ideas and acts upon them. In the light of improvements made over the past two years, the school has demonstrated well that it has the capacity to improve further and that it gives very good value for money.

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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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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	4	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	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	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?	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?	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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

We were pleased to meet you and all the staff and very much enjoyed the time we spent with you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome, talking to us and helping us to find out so much about you and your school. You enjoy school and are happy there. You behave well and get on well with each other. Your school prepares you well for the next stage of your education and your future lives. The grown-ups at school work very hard to care for you and to help you do your best. Those who run the school know a lot about how good its work is and have done a lot in the last two years to make it better. They are keen to carry on this good work. Whilst you are at school you make satisfactory progress. Although standards in your Year 2 and Year 6 tests are below those expected for your age, they are getting better. We have asked that everyone at school works together to make sure that this continues to happen. Teachers are going to make sure that you all understand your targets and know exactly what you have to do so that you learn as well as you can. It is especially important that you all come to school every day to help them with this. We would like to wish you the very best for the future.