



Queen Mary Avenue Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117733
Local Authority North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number 290914
Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006
Reporting inspector Kathryn Dodd

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Queen Mary Avenue
School category	Community		Cleethorpes
Age range of pupils	3–7		DN35 7SY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01472 230230
Number on roll (school)	223	Fax number	01472 230230
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Mike Date
		Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Williams
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2001		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006	Inspection number 290914
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

- Most pupils attending this average sized school are from White British family backgrounds. They come from an area of increasing social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is the proportion having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the appointment of the headteacher in 2003, there have been changes to the management structure, mainly as a result of staff absences.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Parents rightly say that it is a 'caring and welcoming' school. Making sure that children enjoy learning, keep themselves safe and healthy and play an active part within the school community has a high priority in the day-to-day life of the school. Consequently, pupils' good personal development and well-being give them a positive start to their education and they are securely placed to move on to the next phase of their education at the end of Year 2.

Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) are satisfactory. Standards in the 2005 national assessments at the end of Year 2 were below average, but better than previous years. These results reflect the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning which leads to pupils achieving satisfactorily from a below average starting point. There are examples of good teaching and learning, but the best practice is not always highlighted, shared or adopted by all teachers. As a result, pupils' progress varies, with greatest gains being made in the Nursery and in Year 2. This is because teachers do not always give enough attention to assessing what pupils can do, particularly in reading and mathematics. As a result, pupils' work is not always tightly matched to their individual learning needs, and this slows their progress over time. Recent adjustments to the curriculum, however, have made lessons enjoyable and interesting for pupils, especially the boys. They are helping pupils to make up for previous weaknesses in the standard of their work.

Despite a number of challenges, particularly instability in the staffing, the headteacher has set the school on a path of continual improvement. Her clear vision, determination and enthusiasm make a significant contribution. She has forged good partnerships with external organisations, resulting in development opportunities for staff and good support for families of poor attendees or pupils with behavioural difficulties. Governors and staff who have management responsibilities share the headteacher's vision for the future. However, the pace of change is slow. This is because their roles are insufficiently developed to provide the headteacher with support to enable her to achieve all her aims. Staff are, however, keen to make a greater contribution. They know that their next step is to collect and use information about pupils' progress, the quality of the teaching and learning and the curriculum to identify where improvements are needed most in order to raise achievement further. Nevertheless, this is a school that knows its own strengths, is not afraid to say that it can do even better, and has pinpointed the right priorities for improvement. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make regular assessments of what pupils can do in reading and mathematics, and use this information to match work tightly to their learning needs.
- Ensure that pupils make an even rate of progress across the school as a result of consistently good teaching and learning.

- Develop the roles of staff with management responsibilities, so that they contribute more fully to improving provision and raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although standards are below average, pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. When they start Nursery, their attainment is below that found typically for their age, especially that of boys. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are weak. Girls and boys make satisfactory progress, but they make more rapid gains in the Nursery than in Reception. Recent changes to the curriculum, intended to motivate boys and increased opportunities for learning to talk, have started to raise standards by the time children transfer to Year 1.

Between 2001 and 2004, the school's results at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although this represented satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points, a small number of pupils did not make enough progress, especially boys. The headteacher's mission to raise standards rightly highlighted writing as a priority, along with tackling the challenging behaviour, poor attitudes and low attendance of a few pupils. A curriculum is developing that inspires pupils to learn, especially boys. In writing, pupils' progress is regularly checked and targets for future learning are clear. These factors contributed to improved national assessments in 2005, especially in writing, particularly for boys. The results for the 2006 assessments suggest that this trend of improvement is continuing. As a result, pupils are starting to make up for previous weaknesses, particularly during Year 2. Nevertheless, pupils' progress remains too inconsistent across the year groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic about the new 'Wake up and Shake up' sessions at the start of each day, which help them to understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. The good personal, social and emotional development of children in the Nursery ensures that they settle quickly into school routines. Raising self-esteem and belief in their potential has high priority. Achievements are always acknowledged and celebrated, so that pupils grow in confidence and feel proud. Pupils understand the consistently high expectations of their behaviour, and know what the consequences of their actions are. This makes a good contribution to their moral development and has helped to improve their behaviour. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, and the school council enables all pupils to contribute to making the school community a happy and safe place. Attendance, although below the national average, has improved recently. This is the result of the school's work with pupils and parents to encourage regular attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. Teachers and support staff have responded with enthusiasm to changes in practice, and initiatives to raise standards. Good organisation, use of modern technologies, positive relationships and good management of pupils' behaviour are strong features of most lessons. The quality of teaching and learning, however, varies across classes and between subjects. A major factor in this is that teachers do not consistently assess what pupils can already do, particularly in reading and mathematics. As a result, planned work does not always match the differing needs of the pupils which results in them making inconsistent progress across the school. In addition, teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not always high enough. Pupils sometimes spend lesson time completing activities that do not challenge their thinking or move learning on sufficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Recently, the school has revised the curriculum by linking ideas from different subjects together in order to make pupils' learning more interesting, enjoyable and more closely matched to their needs. The Nursery curriculum, for example, ensures that weaknesses in speaking and listening skills are quickly addressed, and that boys develop better attitudes to learning from an early age. Similarly, there are now specific programmes in use to help pupils that need an extra boost to their learning and to help more able pupils reach higher levels of attainment in Years 1 and 2. The result of such changes can be seen in the improving standards in Year 2. This is just a start, however, and the school has recognised that there is further work to do to ensure that the curriculum is refined to take account of information from the regular tracking of the progress of all pupils in the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Satisfactory procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils are in place. Relationships are good, and pupils know that staff will help them to overcome their difficulties. Improving links with parents and good support from external organisations help pupils to make satisfactory progress. The 'nurture group' gives valuable guidance to parents who are keen to support their children at school and at home. This improves pupils' behaviour, attitudes and attendance. In Year 2, pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their writing. This is because teachers use the information from regular assessments to set individual targets, in small achievable steps. Helpful marking of their work informs them of how well they are getting on and how to improve. These practices contribute to the good progress pupils in Year 2, make in writing.

However, this is not the case in all classes, nor is this good practice applied consistently in reading and mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. By working together, leaders and managers have created an ethos of valuing and nurturing pupils as individuals. Parents appreciate the open and welcoming approach, particularly that of the headteacher. She is steering the school through difficult times, and makes a considerable contribution to driving improvement. Despite falling rolls, long-term staff absences, a high turnover of governors and financial constraints, improvements are evident. Pupils' good personal development, including better attendance, a more appropriate curriculum and closer attention to capturing the interest of boys, have contributed to raising pupils' achievement. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, and has pinpointed the right priorities to move the school forward. Although staff and governors are supportive, progress is slow. Staff absences and the consequent uncertainties about leadership and management have limited the capacity of the school to watch over the effect of planned initiatives to raise standards, and the tracking the progress of pupils. However, these issues are currently being resolved. As a result, the school is securely placed to maintain the steady improvement since the last inspection.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Queen Mary Avenue Infant School

Queen Mary Avenue

Cleethorpes

DN35 7SY

14 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were all very keen to talk to us and answered all our questions really thoughtfully. I am pleased that so many of you enjoy coming to your school. I particularly liked seeing so many of you enjoying taking part in your wonderful Christmas show. You all sang, spoke and behaved so well! I can see why your parents and the school are so proud of you. I am particularly pleased to know that, if you have any problems or are upset about anything, there is always someone you can talk to get help. This is because the adults care about you. Your school council is also helping your school to become a happy and safe place. I particularly enjoyed seeing so many of you at the 'Wake Up and Shake up' session in the hall, and am really pleased that you know that this will help to keep you fit and healthy.

As some of you told us, your school has improved recently. Everyone is right to think that your headteacher is working hard to help you do well. Your headteacher, teachers and other adults who help the school all want to make your school even better. They are working hard to make sure that you get more chances to do interesting and exciting things. I have asked the school to keep a closer check on how well you are getting on in your mathematics and reading. This will help your teachers to give you work that is never too easy or too hard, but always gives you the chance to show what you are really capable of. You can help your teachers by making sure that you tell them how you have found your work. When teachers set you targets, such as in writing, you should make sure that you know what they are and check what you still have to do to reach them. I have also asked that your headteacher gets even more help from the other adults who help to run your school, so that you reach your targets more quickly.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector