



Littlecoates Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117964
Local Authority North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number 290981
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Lynne Read

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Harlow Street
School category	Community		Grimsby
Age range of pupils	3–11		DN31 2QX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01472 354601
Number on roll (school)	154	Fax number	01472 242515
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr S Beasant
		Headteacher	Mrs J Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	19–20 September 2006	290981

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves an area of social deprivation in Grimsby and is included in the local 'Excellence Cluster' project. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is much higher than average and a significant proportion of pupils leave or enter the school part way through their education. When they enter the Nursery, children's development is below that usually seen. There is a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The school has been through a period of instability and staffing changes due to it being under threat of closure. This issue has now been resolved. The new headteacher had been in post for two weeks at the time of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Littlecoates Primary judges itself as a satisfactory school. Inspectors agree and have identified some good features. Value for money is satisfactory. Children enter the school with levels of skill that are lower than usually seen and have a sound start to their education in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes). Standards are broadly average. In July 2006, pupils left Year 6 with results which are similar to those seen in most schools at the average Level 4 but with few pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science. Achievement is satisfactory, but could be better for some pupils capable of higher attainment. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well. Many attain nationally expected standards by the time they leave.

Personal development, including behaviour, is good and a strength of the school. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by taking on a range of jobs. For example, older pupils support younger ones at the playground. Such experience of responsibility prepares pupils well for life in the wider world.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There are good, trusting relationships in class so pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning. Pupils with behavioural or learning difficulties are very well supported and make good progress. However, lessons do not consistently challenge all of the more able pupils.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enhanced by varied opportunities for pupils to visit places and enjoy out-of-school clubs, thus broadening their horizons. Lessons include a good emphasis on personal and health education and, as a result, pupils are able to make informed choices about their lifestyles. Good links with outside agencies contribute a great deal to pupils' learning and well-being. Parents express good level of confidence in the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers, staff and governors pay good attention to safeguarding pupils. They are strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils have full access to all that the school offers. They go to great lengths to involve families and specialists in overcoming issues that might interfere with pupils' academic or personal development. Systems of self-evaluation are sound but improvement plans are being reviewed because they lack precise direction. Good management in English provides a thorough check on provision. Attainment in this subject is carefully tracked and targets are set for each pupil to help them learn; this has led to rising standards. Similar systems are not in place for mathematics and science.

Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Because of proposed closure plans, several experienced teachers and a significant proportion of pupils left the school. Subsequently, achievement declined. The school is now secure, has a refreshed feel and is moving forward. Work done by the deputy headteacher has led to recent, good improvements. The new headteacher is clearly committed to raising standards and is reviewing policies and practice to this end. There is good morale among staff and a sound capacity for the school to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons provide sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils.
- Develop the systems for tracking and setting targets for individual pupils in mathematics and science.
- Improve the systems for checking on provision and attainment of pupils in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children's prior learning and experiences are lower than usually seen when they enter the Nursery, especially in language skills. They make satisfactory progress. By the end of the Reception year, attainment remains below expectations overall for this age group but there are some good gains in personal and social development.

In the 2005 tests for Year 6, pupils' standards were just below the national average and achievement was satisfactory. School data shows that in 2006 standards improved with a larger percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4, although fewer than in most schools attained the higher Level 5, especially in mathematics and science. In the 2006 assessments for the Year 2 pupils, attainment was lower than usual for the school. This was due to a teaching issue which has been resolved. The school is working hard to ensure that these pupils make up for any gaps in their learning.

Currently pupils' progress is satisfactory overall but there are some differences between subjects. For example, progress in reading and writing is often good, following a successful plan of action in the subject. Pupils with learning or emotional difficulties and/or disabilities and those who come from a low starting point progress well. This is because special teaching and support programmes are designed to meet their needs and boost their attainment. Some more able pupils, however, are not always fully challenged and as a result do not always do as well as they could. In the 2005 national tests boys out performed girls. Inspection evidence supports the school's view that this is not the usual pattern. In lessons, boys and girls are equally engaged and making similar progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and well behaved. They have good attitudes in the classroom and show genuine enjoyment in their work. Attendance rates are above average. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and say they feel safe and secure. Pupils who feel anxious take advantage of 'time out' and support from the learning mentor to help them regain calmness and confidence. Pupils know how to follow a healthy lifestyle and there is evidence that they do so. For example, they eagerly seek the school council's rewards for a 'healthy lunch box'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They speak knowledgeably about faiths and cultures that are different from their own and are sympathetic to the needs of others. For example, they engage in fundraising for local charities. Through meetings with elected members of the school council, pupils develop an awareness of democracy and make their views known. As a result, pupils now have the type of games they prefer at playtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage provides focused adult-led sessions where children often progress well. However, it is not always clear what the teacher intends the children should learn through their 'choice' activities. Sometimes their play does not have enough purpose. The school is currently reviewing practice in order to improve matters. In Years 1 to 6, some lessons move at a fast pace, promoting good progress. In others, the teacher spends too long talking to pupils, thereby reducing the time for independent work. Well informed teaching assistants provide good support in class.

Where teachers' assessments indicate that pupils are not reaching the standards expected, special programmes are introduced. This has resulted in far more pupils reaching average levels in the Year 6 tests. However, the activities planned for the more able pupils are not always challenging enough or they waste time completing work not hard enough for them before moving on to the more difficult tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and there is good enrichment for pupils' learning. Planning has been reviewed to ensure that lessons provide more breadth and depth and to take better account of how pupils of different ability or disposition learn. This means pupils enjoy lessons but the provision for gifted or talented pupils is not fully developed. The new planning also links subjects together so pupils can practise the skills they learn in one subject in other subjects. It has not had time, as yet, to make an impact on learning but inspectors saw some interesting lessons. For example, one history lesson included work on geography, speaking and listening, writing and mathematics, thus promoting good progress in a range of different skills.

A wide range of after school activities is very popular with the pupils; they especially enjoy the computer club. A good range of visits and visitors to school extends learning beyond the classroom and provides added interest. Good attention is given to personal development, including sex and relationships education and drug awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall with strengths in the personal care and support for pupils. Staff go to great lengths to ensure pupils' safety and well-being and to eliminate factors that get in the way of learning. The learning mentor is a central figure in this work which involves extensive links with outside agencies and home visits. Staff know pupils very well; they are proactive and tackle small behavioural issues before they turn into problems. Where there is a need for exclusion, the school works well with families and other education providers to reintegrate pupils as quickly as possible.

Pupils receive feedback in lessons and through marking which provides helpful advice on how to make their work better. They have useful targets for learning in English which they know and understand and which are helping them to improve. This good system is not extended to mathematics and science.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and promote good personal development and rising standards. Management reports provide a useful overview of the school's strengths and where there is a need for improvement. However, the school's action plan does not give clear guidance on how to achieve the improvements required, and within the timescale. The new headteacher is aware of the issue and is developing a better format.

Systems for checking teaching and learning in English are good. Monitoring procedures for mathematics and science are not sufficiently developed or focused on the achievement of the more able. The governors are very supportive and have a sound overview of standards. Many are new to the post and are keen to develop their role, especially in asking searching questions and gathering information for themselves. Governance is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met.

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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	2

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	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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

Littlecoates Primary School

Harlow Street

Grimsby

DN31 2QX

19 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the warm welcome and for helping my colleague and me when we came to visit your school. We would like to share our findings with you.

Littlecoates Primary is a very friendly school. Your behaviour is good, you are polite and you take really good care of each other. You work hard in your lessons and lots of visits and visitors help to make your learning fun. We know how much some of you enjoyed your visit to Hull University recently and how that has inspired you to think about your futures.

All the staff work very hard to make sure you are happy and safe. You like your teachers and we think this encourages you to try hard and helps you to make sound progress. Please thank your parents for sending us lots of replies to the questionnaire. They are pleased with the school. We followed up their comments and have included our findings in the report.

Your work in English, especially writing, has improved well. Your progress is around the same as in most schools but we think that some of you would like more challenge in your lessons. Your teachers agree and so will be trying out some improvements. We have asked them to give you some targets for learning in mathematics and science just like the ones you already have in English, which have helped you to do better. You do some good work in mathematics and science and it would be good if the teachers in charge of these subjects had more time to come and see how well you are doing and check whether the new targets are working.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us know your views so clearly. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Read

Lead inspector