

Kirton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120415
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291721
Inspection date	3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Val Hall
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Knutton
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Station Road Kirton Boston Lincolnshire PE20 1HY
Telephone number	01205 722236
Fax number	01205 722108

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size school serving a semi-rural village near to Boston in Lincolnshire. The number of pupils known to be entitled to claim free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and there are very few whose first language is not English or who are in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils known to have learning difficulties or disabilities, or a statement of special educational need, is higher than in most schools. The majority start and leave the school other than at the normal times. Indicators suggest that many pupils come from backgrounds of social and economic disadvantage. The school has a Healthy School Award.

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 an effective school providing good value for money. Its success is due in no small part to the determination of the headteacher, supported by senior leaders who share the belief that children cannot learn effectively without strong foundations to support their personal, social and emotional needs.

Good pastoral care and support is provided for pupils. Everyone works hard to ensure each child feels valued and secure. Consequently, pupils' personal development is good. Most behave well and develop a sense of responsibility through the many roles they are proud to take on. Some develop confidence beyond their years. The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. This is because the systems for checking on their progress and setting targets are not yet embedded. Attendance is satisfactory but the school does all it can to persuade parents of the importance of good attendance.

Achievement is good. Most start school with skills below age related expectations in their communication, mathematics, creative and social development. They settle quickly into Nursery and make good progress. They continue to flourish in the Reception classes but because there is so much catching up to do with their English and mathematics skills, these are still low when they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to achieve well throughout Years 1 to 6. This achievement is not always reflected in the results of tests and assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 which show standards in English, mathematics and science as fluctuating but generally below average at the end of Year 2. This is similar to those of most pupils nationally at the end of Year 6. These results do not demonstrate the school's success because of the high numbers of pupils who arrive and leave throughout the year.

Teaching is satisfactory. Some good teaching was seen during the inspection but the best features are not being applied in all classes. Teachers encourage positive relationships and attitudes. They manage behaviour and get to know pupils well. However, not all are as skilled in ensuring that planning for lessons results in enough challenge for all pupils. Marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve. The good progress pupils make overall is in no small part due to highly skilled teaching assistants who work closely with class teachers to ensure all who receive their support do well, and to the good curriculum which helps to ensure that pupils are interested and keen to learn.

Leadership and management are good because senior staff know the school well and have introduced robust systems for checking how well pupils are progressing. The work of some curriculum leaders has started to impact on the standards pupils reach, for example in the Foundation Stage. Not all play their full role in checking on the work of the school and driving forward school improvement. However, the school's success in addressing the issues from the previous inspection and the determination to do even better, demonstrates that there is good potential for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring good practice is consistently applied.
- Ensure all pupils know how well they are doing, what their target is for the next step of learning and how to achieve it.
- Ensure all curriculum leaders play their full role in checking on the work of the school and driving forward school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils enter Nursery with very low levels of attainment in language and communication, mathematical, creative and social skills. With good teaching in the Foundation Stage they make good progress but have so much catching up to do in some areas that standards are still below those expected when they enter Year 1. Children continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Teacher assessments at Year 2 in 2006, showed standards were below average, but this represents good progress for these pupils. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are rising here. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 progress well. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been improving in recent years and are now satisfactory and sometimes better. The large number of pupils who start and leave the school throughout the year disguise the true picture of pupils' achievement. Records show that those pupils who remain in the school for a long time make good progress. With the good range of support available to them, pupils with learning difficulties and those whose first language is not English, achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including social, moral and spiritual development are good. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of different cultures. They value the good number of trips, visits out and visitors the school provides. These activities help to broaden their horizons and provide lasting memories. Pupils make a good contribution within and beyond their community, for example, helping to improve behaviour and enjoyment as playground toy monitors or organising fundraising events. An emphasis on healthy eating and physical activity has helped them to develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy. They are taught successfully about how to keep safe. Attendance is satisfactory. The school's work to improve attendance continues, though a few parents seem to be reluctant to cooperate. Good personal development and improving basic skills prepare pupils well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall though aspects of good teaching were seen during the inspection. Teachers make the lessons interesting. They ensure good behaviour and relationships so that pupils gain confidence. Pupils enjoy lessons and talk enthusiastically about their work. When asked what they would change about the school, one pupil volunteered: 'Make the school year longer so that you can do more work!' A significant factor in ensuring good progress for pupils is the numbers of highly skilled teaching assistants who work closely with teachers to effectively support pupils, individually and in groups, within and outside the classroom. Senior leaders are improving the way the school checks on the quality of teaching. A more robust system for assessing pupils and setting targets for improvement has been introduced. However, this has not been consistently applied by all teachers across the school. Teachers plan work conscientiously, but not all are as skilled in ensuring that this results in work that challenges all pupils, particularly the most able. Marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good emphasis upon the development of basic skills. These are further enhanced with stimulating activities in other subjects which bring learning alive, engage pupils and help them to progress well. The recent review of the curriculum has linked subjects together more imaginatively. It ensures that skills progress logically over time. However, this is too new to be able to fully measure its impact on standards. The attractive displays around the school show that pupils can reach high standards in their work, particularly in art. The curriculum is much enhanced by a range of visits and visitors and by the use of the local community and environment. There is a good range of extra activities offered at lunch times and after school. These add considerably to pupils' enjoyment and the development of personal skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care of pupils is good. The headteacher and staff believe strongly in providing good pastoral care for pupils in order to effectively promote their personal development. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and arrangements for child protection are rigorous and well known. Arrangements have been made to update staff training and related administrative procedures in this regard. Pupils arriving at different times in the year settle quickly because of the good systems in place to make their entry to the school a positive experience. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school's monitoring systems can quickly identify where pupils are finding learning more difficult or not making as much progress as they should. This enables staff to put measures in place to help them improve. However, these measures are not yet consistently applied throughout the school and many pupils are not clear about their next steps of learning in reading, writing and mathematics or about what they need to do to achieve them. The team of effective teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' care, personal and academic development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, supported by senior leaders has ensured a focus on school improvement, particularly that school is an enjoyable and fulfilling place to be. There is a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses and a focus on ensuring challenging targets are met through systems for assessment and tracking pupil progress. Not all curriculum leaders are playing their full role in rigorously checking on the work of the school and driving forward improvement. School leaders promote effective partnerships with outside bodies which add to the personal development and care of pupils. The school works hard to take in to account the views of pupils and parents, though there are a very few parents who believe it could do more in this regard. The great majority value the work of the school. One volunteered 'My son loves coming to school which I feel is a credit to the teaching staff and management. I am very happy with the education he receives.' The governing body provides a good degree of challenge and supports the school well, particularly through their work to improve the buildings and learning environment for the staff and the pupils.

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Annex A

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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	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	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

4 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kirton Primary School, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire.

I was pleased to meet you and all the staff and very much enjoyed the time I spent with you. Thank you for making me feel so welcome, talking to me and helping me to find out so much about you and your school.

I think you are lucky to go to such a good school where the headteacher and all the other grown-ups do their very best for you. They look after you and care for you well. Your teachers and teaching assistants make learning interesting and enjoyable and they work hard to help you make good progress in lessons. The good behaviour of most of you in class, around school and in the playground really helps you to learn well too. It is clear that you are happy at school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe there. In your tests, you often do as well as pupils in most other schools.

The school is very keen to find ways to help you do as well as you possibly can. Though you already make good progress, I think you could do even better. I have asked the school to make sure that you have targets for your next steps of learning in mathematics, writing and reading. It is also important that you are very clear about what these targets mean and how to achieve them. I have asked the teachers to make sure that they use all the good ways of helping you to do your best, all the time. In the future, everyone who has a role in leading the school is going to play their full part in finding out how well the school is doing and in helping to make sure it gets even better.

I am sure that Mrs Knutton, and all the other adults will continue to do all they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to behave well, working really hard and making sure you come to school every day.

I would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

Lead Inspector