

Gipsey Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120449
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291740
Inspection date	19 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Aldridge

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gill Roberts
Headteacher	Mr David Hodgson
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Gipsey Bridge Boston Lincolnshire PE22 7BP
Telephone number	01205 280240
Fax number	01205 280240

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a small rural school serving Gipsey Bridge and surrounding villages. All the pupils are White and most are of British heritage. They come from a variety of social and economic circumstances; the proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage with learning difficulties is average; none has a statement of special educational need. There are a few pupils in public care. The previous headteacher left in December 2005 and the school was led by a part-time consultant headteacher until May 2006. A team of staff and governors led the school from then until September 2006, when the new headteacher took over. There have also been recent changes of teaching staff. The school forms part of a learning network with five other primary schools; it also belongs to a sports partnership and a science cluster. Its work has been recognised by Artsmark (Gold), The Green Flag Award and for the third time, the Basic Skills Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gipsey Bridge is a good school, and this is how it sees itself. It provides good value for money. Parents are very positive about the provision that it makes for their children. One wrote, 'I genuinely believe that my children couldn't be in better hands.' Many parents help in school and the parents and friends group raises substantial funds to support improvements. Despite considerable turbulence and changes in the leadership of the school, a good quality of education has been maintained. Pupils achieve well; children enter the school with average knowledge and skills; they make good progress in Reception because the teaching is good. The school is in the process of strengthening the good provision in the Foundation Stage by creating an outdoor classroom and additional indoor space. Overall, standards by Years 2 and 6 are above average. Standards are not equally good in all subjects though. The 2006 results show that standards in mathematics in Year 2 were average because a relatively low proportion of pupils reached the higher level. Similarly, standards in English by Year 6 were average because fewer pupils than expected reached the higher level in writing. The school has recognised the need to rectify this and has taken suitable action. Overall, pupils make good progress because they are well taught and thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They are also well cared for and supported. One parent sees the school as 'a big family, nurturing every individual child'. There is a rich and interesting curriculum that contributes well to pupils' good personal development. Pupils develop positive values and good attitudes to learning. They are taught well about personal safety and healthy lifestyles, and there are good opportunities for them to take part in physical activities including competitive sports. Pupils take part in all aspects of school life; they take their responsibilities in school seriously and show concern for one another and for those less fortunate than they are. Because they learn to work together well and leave with good standards of basic skills, they are well prepared for secondary education and ultimately for working life.

The school is well led, managed and governed. The headteacher has the approval of pupils and their parents. The pupils see him as 'firm but fair' and parents find him approachable and recognise that he has made 'an immediate difference'. They applaud the improved communication with parents and additional opportunities for them to discuss their children's progress as well as the mutually respectful relationships he has established with the pupils. They recognise also the renewed enthusiasm of staff and the more positive atmosphere in school. He has started to share responsibilities with staff and together they are working towards a consistent approach to teaching, although they have not yet agreed a policy for teaching and learning. Pupils and parents appreciate the increase in sporting activities and the more outward looking approach to fund raising. Pupils are now able to suggest beneficiaries and ideas for fund raising. According to one parent, 'this has certainly raised my son's awareness of other people's lives and how lucky he is'. The school's good self-evaluation is accurate and it correctly identifies its strengths and areas for improvement. It has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics by Year 2 and in writing by Year 6.
- In consultation with staff, develop a teaching and learning policy for the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Good progress is linked mainly to good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to learning. From average starting points, children in Reception make good progress to reach or exceed expectations in all areas of learning by the end of the year. The school associates slightly lower standards in children's creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world with a lack of 'hands on' activities and is addressing this by increasing space and resources, outdoors and in. By Years 2 and 6, pupils reach above average standards overall. In 2006, standards in writing by Year 2 were well above average, but average in mathematics because few reached the higher level, Level 3. In Year 6, standards were well above average in mathematics, above average in science but average in writing, once again because fewer reached the higher level, Level 5, than had been predicted. Boys and girls make equally good progress, and so do pupils who experience learning difficulties, because they are quickly spotted and well supported. Those in public care also make good progress, as they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and very articulate, and the school's simple rules are well respected. Above average attendance and enthusiastic participation in extra-curricular clubs reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in opportunities for pupils to learn about the diverse cultures and customs in Britain and beyond, so pupils are tolerant of individual differences. They show empathy for those less fortunate than they are, and suggest raising funds for charities of their choice. As the school rewards and celebrates good effort and work, pupils grow in self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils know well how to keep safe and they adopt healthy lifestyles. From lunchtime monitors to house captains and school council representatives, pupils take their responsibilities seriously. They learn to work in groups and teams, although the school recognises that it could build on this by providing enterprise experiences. Through cooking lessons, residential school journeys and camping on the school field, pupils acquire valuable social and independence skills. They leave school well prepared for the next step.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff have responded well to changes initiated by the headteacher, such as the three-part lesson, although this is not part of an overall policy. The changes mean that pupils are better involved in their learning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start and later pupils review what they have learned and are involved in assessing how well they have done. For instance, they mark their own work by using a traffic light system. In most lessons, tasks are well matched to pupils' ages and abilities, but occasionally pupils find these too easy or too difficult. In the best practice, there are different learning objectives for different groups of pupils. Homework arrangements have improved as a result of a survey of parents, and pupils find this helps them, particularly with learning spellings. The

new interactive whiteboards are used well to make learning interesting and enjoyable, and pupils use computers effectively to learn independently. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution and good teamwork between them and teachers supports learning well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It exceeds current requirements, with French being taught to Years 5 and 6, and it is very well enriched for a small school. A wealth of visits, visitors, clubs after school, themed days and weeks, residential school journeys and village events based at the school make school enjoyable and enable pupils to socialise, develop their interests and widen their horizons. The school taps into several networks to add variety and meet individual needs; these include a sports partnership and a science cluster. Links between subjects make learning more meaningful, such as learning about Shakespeare in the context of Tudor history. Although there are good opportunities for pupils to develop the knowledge and skills that help them to develop personally, such as cycling safety, healthy eating, gardening, cookery and a 'life day' when they find out about money matters, the school recognises that it needs to revise its planning for the teaching of personal, social and health education. It is also working towards Healthy Schools' status.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is good. Pupils feel safe in school and say that there is very little bullying. They are confident that there is a trusted adult they can turn to if they feel the need. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. The school's caring atmosphere is much appreciated by parents.

The headteacher has strengthened the arrangements for checking pupils' progress by introducing the use of optional tests. This has helped identify pupils who need an extra boost in order to do their best. Academic guidance has also been improved with the setting of individual targets for each pupil in literacy, numeracy and personal development, although pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not all clear about these, and the school recognises that there is scope for improvement in target setting. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 like having 'something to aim for' and parents are pleased to know what they can do to help pupils at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher quickly took stock of the school on his arrival in September and has put in place a number of key improvements. He has a clear vision for the school that is shared effectively with all stakeholders. He has shared leadership roles amongst staff and enabled them to steer developments. The deputy head has led on assessment for learning and the Foundation Stage coordinator is taking a lead in developing better facilities. The school's administrator is qualified in business management and takes a lead on financial matters, leaving the headteacher free to develop teaching and learning. Staff morale is very good. Governance is good. Through the school's improvement plan, governors are involved in monitoring first-hand how well improvements in provision are supporting learning. They are supportive and very well informed. The headteacher and governors are

responsive to parents' and pupils' views and good use is made of data to diagnose areas for development. The school improvement plan identifies the correct priorities for further development.

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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	2
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	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?	2
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	2
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

20 March 2007

Dear Pupils

GipseY Bridge Primary School, GipseY Bridge, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE22 7BP.

Thank you for making me welcome in your school yesterday, especially those who gave up part of lunchtime to talk to me about school life. I enjoyed my day.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that I agree with you that GipseY Bridge is a good school. It has a special family atmosphere and your parents are very pleased with what it provides for you. I was pleased to hear that you feel safe in school and see how much you enjoy school life. Most of you behave very well and attendance is good; these things help you to learn. You are lucky to have a good headteacher and good teachers too. They are helping you to make good progress and to reach high standards in your work. I was pleased to hear that you all take plenty of exercise, to see some healthy choices in lunchboxes and to find that you know how to keep yourselves safe. Those of you that have responsibilities in school take these seriously and you also do your bit as young citizens by taking part in village life and raising money for charities you have chosen. You learn to get on well together and this, combined with your basic skills, will help you in the future.

Mr Hodgson, the staff and governors know what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They are already working hard to make sure that Year 2 pupils do as well in mathematics as they do in other subjects and that those in Year 6 do as well in writing as they do in reading. I have asked them to agree what they need to do to make teaching and learning even better. You can help by making sure you know what your targets are and doing your very best to reach them.

I hope that you will all have a good Easter holiday.

Best wishes,

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead inspector