



Great Steeping Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120451
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291741
Inspection dates 5–6 February 2007
Reporting inspector George Knights

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Great Steeping
School category	Community		Spilsby
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lincolnshire PE23 5PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01754 830251
Number on roll (school)	119	Fax number	01754 830703
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Drake
		Headteacher	Mrs Alison King
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Great Steeping Primary is a smaller than average sized school serving a rural area toward the east of Lincolnshire. Most pupils join the school when they are four years old. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, including rented and owner-occupied housing. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low, but this reflects the fact that a full free school meals service is currently not available. The number with identified learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. All pupils speak English as their home language. Attainment on entry to the school is average overall, but pupils have lower than expected communication skills and creative development.

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 a good school that meets its aims well. The school's own evaluation of its work accords with these judgements. Pupils make a good start during their first year in school, particularly in improving their communication and creative skills, which are areas of relative weakness when they arrive. Hence, by the time they enter Year 1, pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who are working at levels typical of five year olds.

Results in national assessments in Year 2 have been average in recent years, representing sound achievement. Year 6 pupils achieved well in 2005 and gained above average results. In 2006, results were average, but represented good achievement for that group of pupils. The school's records show that pupils currently in all year groups are achieving well. This achievement stems from good teaching which enables pupils to learn well. Teachers have identified the reasons why pupils have done less well in English in the past and have successfully improved pupils' speaking and listening skills. Writing skills have also been improved, but further work on these is needed. Lessons are planned so that the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities are generally met well. This means that those with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress. However, the most able pupils are sometimes not stretched enough for them to achieve their full potential. The school met challenging targets, based on its detailed assessments of each pupil, in 2006 and has set similarly challenging targets for 2007.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in, as one parent put it, 'many creative, imaginative lessons'. They develop a thirst for learning and value the wide range of experiences provided for them, both in lessons and other activities. They talk engagingly about the many visitors to school and the trips and visits they make. Currently pupils are not able to go on residential trips but the school recognises the important part these can play in enhancing pupils' personal development and is thus considering reinstating them. Teachers successfully link work in different subjects and this makes the curriculum more meaningful for pupils. They are also developing pupils' thinking skills but do not do enough to develop pupils' thinking and reasoning in mathematics.

Pupils' good behaviour, their above average attendance and high levels of participation in extra-curricular activities are illustrations of their enthusiasm for school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and are aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. They make a good contribution to both the school and the wider community and are prepared well for adult life. They particularly appreciate the good guidance they receive from teachers on how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Parents appreciate the good care, guidance and support given to their children in what parents regard as 'such a caring environment'.

This pattern of good provision and pupil achievement is made possible by effective leadership and management. The headteacher gives a strong, clear lead in shaping the direction of the school and ensures that all staff and governors work well together. Accurate evaluation of strengths and weaknesses is used effectively to guide planning

for further development. The school uses resources well and hence gives good value for money. The school has maintained the good provision reported at the time of the previous inspection and has taken effective steps to address the issues raised at that time. The capacity for further improvement in the school is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by improving pupils' writing skills further and developing pupils' mathematical thinking and reasoning skills.
- Ensure that the most able pupils in each class engage in activities that stretch and challenge them to achieve their best.
- Provide a residential experience for all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils join the school their attainment is broadly average, though lower in communication skills and in creative development. Pupils achieve well during their first year in school, particularly in their speaking and listening, so that, by the time they enter Year 1, their knowledge and skills are typical of five year olds pupils nationally. Results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 have, in recent years, been broadly average, representing sound achievement. Results in Year 6 tests were above average in 2005 and average in 2006, representing, in both years, good achievement for the pupils concerned. These results are much better than those at the time of the previous inspection. The school has compelling evidence that pupils currently in the school are achieving well because teachers generally take good care to ensure that work matches their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of all pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and this is illustrated by their good attendance. They work and play very well together and form very good relationships with adults. Their behaviour is good. Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage and quickly become confident and enthusiastic learners. They feel very safe and are confident that staff will look after their needs. They understand the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and to take regular exercise. The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, both through the curriculum and the many additional activities that make up school life. Pupils contribute well to both the school and wider community. The school council provides a valuable means of ensuring that pupils influence aspects of school life. Links with the local church and charity fund-raising are just two ways in which pupils make a good contribution to the wider community. Pupils are successfully acquiring the essential skills that will equip them well for the next stages of education and for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well because teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons to take good account of the different ages of pupils in their classes. Good attention is also paid to ensuring that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported effectively so that they learn well. However, in some activities, not enough attention is paid to ensuring that the most able pupils in each class are stretched to do their best. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to give good support to individuals and groups. Lessons are interesting and stimulating and teachers are becoming increasingly adept at asking questions that enable pupils to answer at length, thus improving their communication skills. Teachers give pupils good information about how they are doing, both orally and through marking, and pupils are becoming increasingly skilled at assessing their own work. This is because teachers make the intended learning clear and help pupils to review how effective they have been at meeting the objectives of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides pupils with an interesting curriculum that meets requirements. Lesson activities are varied and stimulating so that pupils develop their creative and communication skills. This is particularly the case in the Foundation Stage, where the curriculum is planned carefully to help pupils catch up in these areas of their development. Throughout the school, teachers successfully link learning across different subjects. Good progress has been made in developing pupils' thinking and reasoning skills, though there is considerable scope for more work of this nature in mathematics. Lessons are enriched by visitors to the school and by trips and visits, though pupils currently do not have the opportunity for a residential experience. The range of extra-curricular activities is good and large numbers of pupils enthusiastically take part in these.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe are applied carefully by all staff and parents are confident that their children are safe in school. Steps to safeguard learners are fully in place. Pupils care for one another and this is evident in classrooms and on the playground. The varied needs of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are met well but the most able are not always challenged enough. The tracking of pupils' progress is good and the analysis of pupils' performance is used skilfully to give pupils clear guidance on how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Therefore pupils understand the individual targets set for them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides a very strong, clear lead in setting the direction and tone of the school. She has successfully moulded a strong team, all of whom are committed to doing the best for each pupil. Good progress has been made in sharing leadership roles and this has helped all teachers to see their work in the wider context of improvements throughout the school. The analysis of pupil performance is thorough and is used to set challenging targets. Effective evaluation guides the school's plan for further improvement. Governors are becoming increasingly effective in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities and they support the headteacher and her team well. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and are aware of their responsibility to help shape the future direction for the school. Resources are managed well and used effectively. There is an appropriate emphasis on supporting teachers by the effective deployment of teaching assistants.

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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?	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	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.

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

7 February 2007

Dear Children

Great Steeping Primary School, Great Steeping, Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 5PT

I would like to thank you all very much for making me feel so welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. I really enjoyed coming to your lessons, joining you in assembly and watching you play together. Thank you for talking to me about your work and helping me to find my way around.

Because you told me how much you enjoyed it, you will not be surprised that I think yours is a good school. Your teachers and their assistants help you to get off to a good start and ensure that you continue to make very good progress when you are further up the school. They have done some good work to help you all to improve your speaking and listening and your writing has improved a lot recently. I have asked your teachers to continue to work on improving your writing. You clearly enjoy learning and being together and I'm sure that this is because your teachers make lessons interesting. They make sure that the work you do is matched to your needs, though occasionally they do not stretch the most able pupils so that they do as well as they can. Your teachers generally encourage you to think clearly but you need more help to improve your thinking in your mathematics lessons. You told me about how much you value the contribution made by visitors to the school. You like going on trips and visits to places of interest and I have asked your teachers to consider enabling you to go on residential visits. You work hard, you help one another and you try to do your best. You obviously feel very safe in school and this is because your teachers and other members of staff get to know you well, care for you and make sure that you get the support you need.

Your school is well run. The staff, governors and your parents all work very well together to do their best for you. Your headteacher and other members of staff have exciting plans to make your school even better.

My very best wishes to you. I hope that you all do very well in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Knights Lead Inspector