



The Kirkby-la-Thorpe Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120527
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291770
Inspection dates 29–30 November 2006
Reporting inspector Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Kirkby-la-thorpe, Kirkby-la-thorpe
Age range of pupils	4–11		Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 9NU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01529 302595
Number on roll (school)	137	Fax number	01529 302595
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Paul Offley
		Headteacher	Mrs Susan Bradley
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	29–30 November 2006	291770

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average sized school serving the village and surrounding area close to Sleaford in Lincolnshire. A very small number of pupils are currently eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The large majority of pupils are from a White British background. The current headteacher took up her post soon after the previous inspection. The school has been awarded a Silver Arts Mark and Activemark Gold awards.

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 school that provides a good quality of education and which has some outstanding features. The school has made considerable progress and improved since the previous inspection when standards were often high, but there were several areas that required improvement. Parents are delighted with the quality of education with one remarking, 'I feel very privileged my children attend this small school'.

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding as is their behaviour. This directly reflects the excellent care and support teachers and other staff offer pupils. This ensures they feel safe, have a very good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and thrive in the happy 'family' ethos that pervades the whole school.

Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are average overall and in some years there is a good proportion of pupils with higher level skills. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and pupils usually exceed the targets expected of them when they enter Year 1. At the end of Year 2 and 6, standards are above average. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well. More able pupils also usually perform well and build on their previous high levels of attainment. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain good results. It also indicates that standards are not as consistently good in English as they are in mathematics and science.

Teaching and learning are good in all classes, and pupils enjoy school and achieve well. Staff have very good relationships with pupils and make clear their expectation of good behaviour and hard work. The curriculum is good and there are outstanding features in the way the school enriches the curriculum. In the inspection the oldest pupils worked with representatives of Opera North and others visited Eden Camp (a modern history theme museum), activities which really bring learning to life.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is supportive of staff and governors and undertakes her responsibilities very effectively. Staff analyse information from tests and assessments well to identify priorities in school development planning. While the monitoring of the work of the school by governors is satisfactory this lacks rigour in identifying areas for further improvement. Nonetheless, the school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to record their own ideas and produce extended pieces of writing across a range of subjects.
- Ensure that the monitoring of the work of the school by staff and governors is rigorous and evaluative.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The number of children entering the school each year is small, which makes year on year comparisons of standards difficult. While the current group of pupils in the Foundation Stage has a good proportion with above average skills, other cohorts differ and children's skills on entry are generally average overall. They are happy and often confident children, who settle quickly into the school's routines and want to do well. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and, when they enter Year 1, they exceed the targets expected of them, especially in their personal and social development and ability to communicate with others.

Recent national tests and assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 indicate standards are generally above average. Most pupils attain at least the expected level and a good number reach the higher levels. Inspection findings confirm that pupils generally achieve well. In several years pupils have done better in mathematics and science than in reading and sometimes in writing. The current Year 6 cohort is an able group of pupils who are on line to do well in national tests. Less able pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The school however, rightly recognises standards in English are not always as good as they could be.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They work and play together very well and there are very good relationships between pupils and with adults. Pupils have been encouraged to develop a strong understanding of, and interest in, the importance of healthy lifestyles and make good use of interesting outdoor play equipment. They enjoy taking part in a wide range of sporting activities and understand how to keep themselves safe. They much appreciate the high quality of the newly introduced school meals. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities within the school and wider community including the school council and Eco group, which equip them well for their future life and economic well being. As one parent notes her child, 'started school as quite a shy little girl, now she is an outgoing and extremely confident person'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent although the spiritual dimension is not as well developed as other areas. The school promotes community cohesion well and warmly welcomes the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Attendance is well above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are effective across the school because teachers have good expectations of pupil's behaviour and what they can achieve. Staff have excellent

relationships with pupils, who in turn seek their approval by trying hard. Support staff are used well, both to help teach individuals and small groups and to make observations of what the pupils do which feeds into the way their progress is tracked. Teachers plan carefully to provide activities that are well suited to mixed age and ability groups in order to provide a good level of challenge for all. Staff explain things well to their classes but sometimes miss opportunities to involve pupils in their own learning or to encourage them to discuss their ideas with a partner. Equally, staff make too much use of worksheets that limit the way in which pupils are able to record their ideas or extend their writing skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall and has some outstanding elements. These strengths include the arts, where the school has been very successful in extending pupils' experiences to include working with a visiting group of opera singers. There is also very good use of educational visits and extra-curricular activities that greatly enrich learning. The school has developed strong sporting links with other schools and organisations and give great emphasis to teaching pupils the importance of healthy living. Provision for the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills is generally good although opportunities to develop writing skills across the curriculum are not fully utilised, and pupils do not receive sufficient opportunities to work independently.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding and a real strength of the school. Parents are delighted with this aspect, with one noting, 'My children are the most precious thing I have and I know that they are receiving the best care and tuition at Kirkby-la-Thorpe school'. All staff know the pupils very well and quickly recognise when they need help and support. Pupils say they know there is always someone they could talk to and they happily look after each other as seen when older pupils act as play leaders with younger ones. Pupils think school activities help them develop new skills and confidence, illustrated when those in Year 6 happily performed scenes from the operatic version of 'The Pied Piper' to other pupils. Child protection procedures are secure and checks of those who help in school meet current requirements. Staff have developed the way they use individual targets for improvement and track pupils' progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage, where record-keeping is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher plays a strong and very effective role in leading the school. All the areas identified in the last inspection have been tackled well and the school's accommodation has considerably improved with the building of three new classrooms. Staff work well together and form an enthusiastic team keen to keep improving the

school. School self evaluation is now good and at times in pastoral areas a little modest. Staff have developed the role of subject leaders effectively and are much more involved in working with colleagues to improve learning. While governance of the school is satisfactory governors are too dependent on the head for information, but they recognise and are addressing this and it is not now a major issue. There are reasonable procedures to monitor the work of the school by governors but this work is not always rigorous enough to identify the small steps for further improvement.

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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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

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	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

1 December 2006

Kirkby-la-Thorpe Primary School, Church Lane, Kirkby-la-Thorpe, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9NU

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for looking after me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed speaking to several of you in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and in discussions, including with members of the school council. I was very pleased to hear that you feel proud of your school and really enjoy your time there.

These are the things that I found are best about your school -

- Your behaviour is excellent and you really like school.
- Staff look after you very well and make sure you are happy and healthy.
- There are lots of really interesting activities in lessons and after school.
- You make good progress and do well in your work.
- Your parents are as proud of your school as you are.

This is what I think could be improved -

- Teachers should ensure you have more opportunities to produce good quality writing.
- Governors should more regularly check what you are doing so they know what else needs to be improved.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you. Please continue to do the best you can all the time.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead Inspector