

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120537
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291775
Inspection date	11 June 2007
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 category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	179
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Chambers
Headteacher	Mrs Marion Watson
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Lower Church Road Skellingthorpe Lincoln Lincolnshire LN6 5UZ
Telephone number	01522 682689
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school near Lincoln. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is close to the national average. The large majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The school has been awarded a Basic Skills quality mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. There is a strong Christian ethos to the school and good relationships are central to everything. Parents are generally pleased with the quality of education provided. They believe their children enjoy school although there are a small number with individual concerns. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Children enter the school having benefited from a range of early learning experiences so that they have the skill levels expected. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and achieve the levels expected for their age when they enter Year 1. Progress in Years 2 to 6 is also satisfactory. The school's assessment and tracking information clearly shows that over the past few years the rate of progress has varied, and in relation to pupil's starting points it has not always been good enough. The school has worked hard to eradicate underachievement and there is emerging evidence that progress is beginning to improve. Results of national tests indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have fluctuated but inspection findings indicate that standards this year are broadly average and pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' personal development is good. The strong spiritual element to daily worship is reflected in many activities including how pupils are praised and rewarded. The behaviour of the large majority of pupils is good. They understand how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle and enjoy active playtimes in the large school grounds. Most become confident and articulate young people which helps them prepare for their later life. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities within the school, for example as playtime helpers.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. The teaching of pupils from Year 2 to 6 is now more consistent and effective than in recent years. The teaching of pupils in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is broadly satisfactory. However, the quality of teaching overall varies and learning is still not entirely secure. At times there is a lack of challenge and staff do not always have high enough expectations of pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory and has some good features. There is a good focus on enrichment activities with high quality work in the arts. The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory overall. Within this aspect of the school's work, pastoral care of pupils is good. Staff have good relationships with pupils who are often keen to please and so work hard. However, the school has not been rigorous in ensuring that all risk assessments and health and safety checks are completed and acted upon.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is providing good and well focused leadership. She is supportive, determined and has a good understanding of school strengths and areas for further development. While there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection the pace of developments has not always been rapid enough. The monitoring of the work of the school is satisfactory overall, although not all staff are sufficiently involved in this process, particularly those with team leader responsibilities. Governors are well led and fulfil their roles satisfactorily.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring a consistently high level of challenge is provided for all groups of pupils.

- Extend the opportunities for staff to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in order to identify the further steps for improvement.
- Ensure that all risk assessments and health and safety checks are completed and acted upon as a matter of urgency.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the Reception class with a wide range of skills and overall are working at the levels expected for their age. However, a small number of children exceed these levels in relation to their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. Furthermore, many of children have good personal and social skills for their age. They are confident and communicate well. While their early writing and calculation skills are not always highly developed many have the basic skills to enable them to do well. When they enter Year 1 pupils have achieved the goals expected for their age and a fair proportion exceed these in some areas.

Outcomes of national tests at Years 2 and 6 show an unusual and fluctuating pattern of attainment. Following the period when the school was identified as requiring support, standards started to improve but in recent years results have varied indicating that an upward trend is not secure. For instance, in 2006 standards fell considerably from the previous two years. Standards in mathematics were particularly disappointing and significantly below those in English. School data shows that variations in standards were due to inconsistencies in teaching and despite the best efforts of those teaching the oldest pupils it was not always possible to help them make up the ground lost lower down in the school. However, standards are currently average and the achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, is satisfactory because teaching is now of a consistently sound quality.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is good as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Key to much of this is the strong Christian element to the work of the school and in particular the lead the headteacher provides in this area. As one parent notes: 'The school works hard to teach the children values. It also teaches them to take responsibility for themselves and to show respect.' The large majority of pupils behave well. Whilst some pupils are concerned about minor bullying incidents involving older boys, the school monitors this carefully and takes quiet but appropriate action where necessary to ensure pupils are safe and free from stressful situations. A growing number of pupils enjoy the recently re-introduced healthy school lunches although more remains to be done to convince everyone to make healthy choices. The school has developed numerous links with local organisations to help pupils understand the world beyond school. In addition, pupils have opportunities within school to take on responsibilities all of which helps them prepare for the future. Attendance is largely average but attendance figures are considerably affected by the unusually high proportion of families who take holidays in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall there is much that is now good in teaching from Years 2 to 6. Throughout the school staff have good relationships with pupils and make clear their expectations of good behaviour. Learning support assistants are used effectively in lessons to work either with individuals or groups, which helps them to make progress. In Years 2 to 6 teachers plan carefully to provide a good level of challenge for groups of pupils of different abilities. In Reception and Year 1 this is less evident and staff do not always expect enough of pupils. Checks of pupils' progress clearly show that across the school the quality of teaching and learning, in recent years, has not been consistent and pupils have not always made the progress for which they were capable. There are still gaps in pupils' learning across the school but staff are working successfully to remedy this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and there are some good features. There is good enrichment of the curriculum, especially in the arts as shown in attractive art work around the school and the number of pupils learning to play musical instruments. Since major re-structuring, curriculum planning is now focused upon a framework similar to the areas of learning for younger pupils. This is providing a good focus on key areas but is still at a relatively early stage and not yet fully embedded across the school. The sample of pupils' recent work shows good open-ended opportunities for them to record their own ideas in a range of formats that encourages different writing styles and mathematical strategies. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but learning is restricted by the bland and limited learning environment, including the outdoor area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well known by the staff and some parents speak glowingly of the personal care given to their children. Pupils know there are people, particularly the headteacher that they can talk to if they feel unhappy, although they have less confidence that their concerns are acted upon by mid-day staff. The care for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is satisfactory but a small number of parents are worried that the school does not act quickly enough to identify when there are concerns. Inspection evidence indicates the reviews of some individual education plans are not rigorously monitored. Similarly risk assessments and health and safety matters are not always identified and acted upon well enough. The school takes action to ensure appropriate checks are completed for those who work and help in school. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school now has good assessment routines which track the progress individuals make as they move through the school. However, such information is not always used well enough to ensure the highest appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory as is the capacity to improve. The leadership of the hardworking headteacher has been a key feature in enabling the school to move forward from its troubled past. However, school self-evaluation is more generous than is indicated by the actual outcomes for pupils. The headteacher and deputy have worked purposefully to overhaul curriculum planning and raise expectations in teaching. Other members of staff now take greater responsibility for what happens across the school. They successfully work in teams to lead developments in key areas such as literacy and numeracy. The roles of Special Educational Needs Coordinator and Foundation Stage Leader are currently shared by the headteacher and other members of staff. Leadership in these areas is satisfactory but provision in both areas could be even more robust. The governing body is well led and governors are working hard to fulfil their roles better. While procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are in place most of this work is carried out by the headteacher. There are plans to extend the opportunities for subject team leaders to be involved but there have been few opportunities for other staff to share such responsibilities. This limits the school in its ability to use the skills and expertise of all staff to evaluate performance and agree appropriate strategies for maintaining strengths and remedying weaknesses.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	3

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	3

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.

Annex A

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

11 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, Skellingthorpe, LN6 5UZ

Thank you very much for looking after me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed speaking to you in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and at the meeting with the 'Good 2 Talk' group.

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

- There is a strong feeling of Christian care for everyone.
- There are some good opportunities to learn new skills in the arts, including in art and design and music.
- You behave well and try hard with your work.
- The headteacher is leading the school well.

These are areas that I think could be improved.

- The work you do could be harder sometimes to help you to do even better.
- The staff should check carefully what happens in lessons and look at the quality of your work to find out what needs to be improved.
- The staff and governors need to check more regularly that everything in and around the school building is well maintained to make sure it is always a safe and comfortable place to learn and play.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly towards me. You all contribute well to the life of the school and the local community. You can help the school to succeed even more by trying really hard all the time and making sure you come to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead Inspector