



Great Ponton C of E School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120602
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291796
Inspection date 16 November 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mill Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Great Ponton, Grantham
Age range of pupils	4-11		Lincolnshire NG33 5DT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01476 530306
Number on roll (school)	44	Fax number	01476 530306
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Peter Overton
		Headteacher	Mr Jon Clack
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils come to this small school mainly from the village of Great Ponton and are taught in three classes in the morning and two in the afternoon. Almost all pupils are from White British families and most are from advantaged economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average.

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 education for its pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school has been more successful in promoting pupils' good personal development and well-being than promoting high levels of achievement. As a consequence, pupils' personal development and well-being are good and academic standards are average. Across the school as a whole, achievement and pupils' progress are satisfactory. Pupils make a good start in Reception and continue to do well in Years 1 and 2. Progress from Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but pupils make slower progress in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6 because a few pupils are not being extended sufficiently. Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils with learning difficulties to enable them to make satisfactory progress, but a few pupils in Years 3 to 6 who are achieving slightly below what is expected for their ages require extra support to help them catch up. The school's curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in personal, social and health education. All staff ensure that pupils are well mannered and work cooperatively. Behaviour is good and, because pupils are happy and enjoy working and learning together, levels of attendance are above average. The school is a happy school. One parent reported that her child, 'looks forward to going to school each day which makes me happy'. Pupils show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves and others safe. The school has formed very good partnerships with other local schools and the church and these help broaden pupils' experiences.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All teachers establish very good relationships with pupils and know them well as individuals. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently, but the quality of marking is inconsistent and often fails to provide pupils with enough guidance on how to improve their work. The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. The school has recently started some useful work to set challenging targets for pupils and to remind them of these targets during lessons. This initiative is in its early stages, however, and most pupils, particularly in the older classes, have limited knowledge of the particular areas they need to concentrate on in order to improve their work. This occasionally slows their progress. The school has made satisfactory improvement since its previous inspection and provides satisfactory value for money. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work have recently improved and are satisfactory, but further staff training in this area is needed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in the older classes by ensuring staff give pupils a clear understanding of how to improve specific aspects of their work, both in their marking and through setting challenging targets for pupils.
- Target extra support and expect more of the few pupils in Years 3 and 4 who could progress at a faster rate.
- Ensure the headteacher and staff develop more effective monitoring and evaluation skills to promote consistently good teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills in line with those expected nationally. Good provision ensures that they get off to a good start and progress well so that many exceed national expectations by the time they move into Year 1. For instance, most Reception children already know their letter sounds and are beginning to use these to read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. From Years 3 to 6, national data and inspection evidence indicate that pupils make progress in line with those in similar schools nationally. Year 5 and 6 pupils make better progress than those in Years 3 and 4 because challenging teaching speeds up progress. National test scores for the last three years and pupils' work indicate that Year 6 pupils have attained average standards. School assessments and inspection evidence indicate that the current Year 6 pupils are now attaining better standards than in previous years and are on track to achieve standards a little above average in mathematics and English. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because their needs are properly assessed and staff ensure they are fully involved in lessons. Satisfactory standards in English and mathematics and improved provision in information and communication technology (ICT) help ensure that pupils are adequately equipped for the next stage of education and the world of work beyond.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, particularly when they are challenged in lessons. They are courteous and considerate towards one another. Pupils also relate well to the adults who work with them. Pupils behave sensibly and with high regard for their own and others' safety. They comment, 'Pupils are friendly here and everyone gets on well with each other.' Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory but they show limited understanding of cultures other than their own.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community in, for example, helping to develop the school garden. Older pupils readily accept responsibility for helping younger pupils, for example by helping them dress more quickly after the weekly swimming club. Pupils speak confidently about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and know what makes a healthy meal and healthy packed lunch. Pupils are involved very well in working with other small schools in the community and with local secondary schools. These links and good links with the church enable pupils to make a good contribution to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers show strong commitment to their pupils, work hard and establish very good relationships in all lessons. Effective teaching and use of assessment in the youngest class ensures that all pupils make a good start at school and learn well. The use of assessment is less effective in the older classes where marking is often too general and does not provide enough guidance to pupils on where and how to improve specific aspects of their work. In Years 3 to 6, teaching assistants concentrate on providing additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and this helps these pupils participate in lessons, enjoy learning and make satisfactory progress. In Years 3 and 4, because sometimes not enough is expected, a few pupils working at a little below average do not progress at a fast enough rate to attain the levels expected for pupils of their ages.

Most teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge in their teaching and present information clearly and sometimes with great enthusiasm. In a Year 5/6 English lesson, for example, because of enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching, pupils enjoyed learning and discussing a difficult poem by Walter de la Mare and later performed it well from memory in the family assembly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for Reception children is good and supports children to get off to a good start especially in their personal, social and emotional development. The school places strong emphasis on personal, social and health education and this has led to good standards of personal development and well-being. Provision for English and mathematics is satisfactory and this results in most pupils making satisfactory progress in these subjects. However, there are insufficient additional teaching programmes to provide extra support to pupils in Years 3 to 6 who are at risk of falling behind in literacy and numeracy. The use of new technology has improved due to much improved resources. Staff confidence and skills in using ICT equipment are developing well. Very good links with other small schools in the area and with local secondary schools enable pupils to get together on various projects, mainly relating to sports and the arts. These help broaden pupils' experiences and help prepare them for secondary education. Residential visits with another school are much enjoyed and well planned to promote pupils' confidence and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of pastoral care is good and is evident in the positive relationships among everyone at the school. Secure procedures, routines and staff training, ensure that

standards of health and safety are maintained and that child protection arrangements are clear to everyone and effective.

The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are carefully assessed and they receive good support when teaching assistants work effectively to ensure that they have the opportunity to benefit from all lessons and make satisfactory progress. Teachers do not consistently give pupils targets that help them see clearly where to focus their efforts to improve or involve them in assessing how well they have done.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has been most effective in providing a lead on how pupils behave and relate to one another. Because this is given high priority, pupils' personal development is good and they behave well. His leadership of teaching and learning has been less successful, resulting in satisfactory teaching and progress and average standards. However, the school is already taking steps to remedy this situation. Improved monitoring and self-evaluation means that the headteacher now has an accurate view of where improvements are needed and has established a sound plan, focusing on the correct issues, to raise standards and improve achievement. This is providing the school with a satisfactory capacity to improve. Subject leaders are beginning to develop a knowledge of strengths and areas requiring improvement and have started to observe lessons in their subjects. This means that they are better placed to provide colleagues with guidance on how to improve their teaching and it also provides staff with the opportunity to learn from each other. Some aspects of monitoring and evaluation remain underdeveloped. For example, there has been no staff training in analysing test papers so that possible weaknesses in learning can be highlighted and addressed. Governance is good. Governors are effectively organised to carry out their roles and have developed a good understanding of where the school needs to improve. This is enabling them to provide effective support and challenge to the school in its efforts to raise achievement from satisfactory to good.

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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?	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	2
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	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	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.

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	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

17 November 2006

Dear Children

Great Ponton Church of England Primary School, Mill Lane, Great Ponton, Grantham, Lincolnshire
NG33 5DT

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your school. I am pleased that you like school. I thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and your teachers, and watching you learn. I think your school is giving you a sound education. You make satisfactory progress in your learning and the headteacher and staff are working hard to improve the school so that you can make even better progress.

Here are the things that I think are best about your school:

- Your behaviour is good and you are polite and considerate towards one another.
- You know right from wrong, show consideration for others and understand what it means to be friendly to each other.
- Many older pupils take responsibility for helping others within the school.
- You attend regularly and arrive at school on time.

These are the things that I think could be better:

- I have asked your teachers to give the older children a clearer idea of what they need to do to improve their work, for example by having targets to reach.
- A few of you could make better progress if you were given harder work and some extra help from adults.
- The staff need to improve the ways they check how well the school is doing to help make your learning even better.

With very best wishes for the future

Mr Sadler

Lead Inspector