



St Norbert's Catholic Primary School, Spalding

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120616
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291800
Inspection date 27 February 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Weston HMI

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

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Tollgate |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Spalding |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 | | Lincolnshire PE11 1NJ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01775 722889 |
| Number on roll (school) | 138 | Fax number | 01775 762465 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr Mike Roberts |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Elizabeth Jordan |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 September 2001 | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Age group 4-11 | Inspection date 27 February 2007 | Inspection number 291800 |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in one day.

Description of the school

The school is situated close to the centre of the Lincolnshire market town of Spalding. It is smaller than most primary schools and is the only Catholic primary school in the town. As a result, pupils attend from a wide area. There are fewer pupils claiming free school meals than average. Pupils are mostly from white British backgrounds although there is an increasing number from other European countries. An average number is at the early stages of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that in most schools. There are fewer with a statement of educational need. Pupils' attainment on entry to Reception is generally around that expected. The school has recently been awarded Basic Skills Quality Mark 4 and the Activate award for physical education (PE).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Norbert's is a good school. It has improved rapidly following a period of some turbulence. It is a warm Christian community that welcomes each individual pupil. Parents value the positive 'family' atmosphere and this is one reason that many choose the school for their children, even if it means travelling some distance. Close links with outside agencies are used well so that pupils with learning difficulties and those from other countries are provided with good support. The school provides good value for money.

A strong feature of the school's work is the personal development and well-being of pupils, which is good. Very good relationships result in pupils working hard and feeling valued by the staff and by each other. Pupils are cared for well. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy school and want to be there. The older pupils willingly take on responsibilities around the school. The good curriculum keeps pupils interested, and this is well supported by a wide range of after school clubs. These make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning new skills through music and sport. The next steps are to further develop the curriculum and increase opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. In recent years standards have been average by the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils' achievements have been broadly satisfactory. They are now good. Standards have been commonly above average in Year 6, although they have been steadily declining in recent years. In 2006, standards were just above average in English and mathematics and broadly average in science. Most pupils made good progress. Newly introduced systems to assess and track pupils' progress, combined with improvements in teaching and better planning is helping target support where it is most needed. As a result, pupils are starting to make better progress, particularly in writing, where gaps in learning are being closed although there is more to be done to improve the achievement of boys. Overall because teaching and learning are effective standards are now good and pupils achieve well.

The headteacher gives a good, caring lead to the school and is the driving force behind recent improvements to the curriculum, teaching and learning. She has been extremely successful in managing recent staffing changes and recruiting staff of high quality. Staff and governors are a dedicated team and there is a shared commitment to help move the school forward. Subject leaders are improving their skills in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision. They recognise that this area requires further development to ensure that the headteacher is fully supported in taking the school forward and the improvements recently made are strengthened. The recent good progress and the commitment of everyone working together for the benefit of the pupils, as well as strong partnerships with outside agencies, show that the school has good capacity to develop further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in writing, particularly for the boys, by increasing opportunities to write in a variety of circumstances.
- Develop further links between subjects, particularly ICT so that the curriculum is more thought-provoking, enjoyable and interesting for pupils.
- Enable leaders of subjects to check on teaching to know how well pupils are learning and what is needed to improve provision further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. As a result of careful planning and good teaching, pupils get off to a cracking start in Reception where most make good progress. Until this academic year, this good start has not been sustained in Years 1 and 2. As a result, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, with few achieving the higher levels. Better teaching is now helping pupils increase their rates of progress. Standards in Year 2 are now good. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been above the national average in all subjects. However, there has been a declining trend since 2004. By 2006, standards were just above average in English, and mathematics. They were broadly average in science. Despite this, good progress was made by the 2006 group, particularly boys, from their starting points in Year 2. Over half of the cohort achieved the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. Some lower attaining pupils did not make satisfactory progress. The headteacher supported by her new team has injected greater urgency to improve pupils' progress throughout the school. Recently introduced assessment, tracking and target systems are now beginning to be used more effectively. Observation in lessons and work seen in books shows increased levels of challenge for all pupils resulting in higher standards. As a result of focused teaching and targeted support, most pupils are now making good progress. Achievement and standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in writing remain behind those of reading, especially for boys. The school has implemented a range of strategies to close the gap but knows that there is still more to be done, particularly by creating further opportunities to write across the curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and confident and they happily work and play together. By Year 6, pupils have developed into well-rounded individuals who have acquired appropriate skills to help them in later life. Very good relationships throughout the school create a happy and supportive school community in which pupils feel valued. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school works successfully to increase pupils' understanding of life in a culturally diverse society. They develop a strong sense of responsibility and

community and are very sensitive to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They lead active lives and know the importance of healthy eating. They know how to keep safe and comment that 'bullying doesn't happen,' but if they are unhappy, staff 'sort it out'. Pupils take on a wide range of duties around the school. The school council contributes well to the life of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The close matching of work to individual needs is successfully raising standards and increasing rates of progress. Enthusiasm for learning is firmly established in Reception and continues in later years. Throughout the school, pupils want to please their teachers because of the warm and supportive relationships. Pupils say their learning is interesting. As one pupil said, 'I like it at school because it's fun!' Another added, 'teachers help us to understand our work.' Teaching assistants support small groups so that differing needs are met well. Teachers make clear to pupils at the start of lessons what will be learned over the session and revisit objectives regularly. Marking is regular and generally gives good guidance on the next steps to improve, particularly in written work. Some teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation, at times accepting poorly formed and untidy writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum with a strong emphasis on improving skills in English, mathematics and science. This helps pupils to build a good foundation for their next school, and eventually for the world of work. Statutory requirements are planned and delivered well. However, development in linking work between subjects to make the curriculum more interesting and enjoyable is an early stage. Recently, there has been good improvement in the provision for ICT. However, the school knows there is still work to do in realising the benefits that ICT can bring to other subjects and to further develop pupils' skills of independence. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs and by visitors to the school. Younger pupils talk excitedly about their recent theatre visit to see 'The Iron Man' and older pupils are looking forward in eager anticipation to their forthcoming residential visit. Good links have been established with the community, for example by participating in the South Holland Carnival and Spalding Flower Festival.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school successfully places the personal care of its pupils at the centre of its work. All pupils are treated as part of the 'school family'; members of staff know the pupils

well. They work very closely with parents and outside agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being including the checks of those who help in school. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure and they know what to do if they have a worry. Pupils are supported well when they first start school in the Reception class, enabling them to settle very quickly. Their progress is monitored very carefully in all areas of learning. Newly established assessment and tracking systems in Years 1 to 6 are at an early stage of development and the school knows that these need to be consistently implemented. Already, these systems are enabling teachers to track pupils' progress more thoroughly and help staff to identify pupils with learning difficulties swiftly so that additional support is provided at an early stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides strong, compassionate leadership. She is successfully focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of learners. She is well supported by her dedicated and committed staff. New staff members have been well integrated into school and are increasingly effective. The new team has established clear plans for improvement. Many of the actions to raise standards are having a good impact on improving teaching and learning. In this small school, some subject leaders have a high number of responsibilities and some are new to the role. Although some subject managers have had the opportunity to review the school's work and identify areas for improvement, they have not yet had the chance to check how well pupils are learning and what is needed for them to improve. Governors are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed to the school. They receive a good range of information about the school and their support is valued especially through recent difficult times. The views of pupils and parents are actively sought. They express high levels of satisfaction with the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

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.

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 | 3 |
| 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

28 February 2007

Dear Children

St Norbert's Catholic Primary School, Tollgate, Spalding , PE11 1NJ

Thank you for welcoming me so well to your school. I very much enjoyed my time talking with many of you. It was good to hear how much you enjoy school. You told me that you think it is a good school and I agree. Most of your parents and carers also told me they really like your school and feel you learn well. You work hard in class and this is because, as some of you told me, your teachers make their lessons interesting and fun. This is helping most of you to make good progress. All adults look after you really well and you feel safe and secure in school. I really liked the way that older pupils play with younger ones and how most of you get on well together. You also told me that you enjoy all the extra activities that are provided. For example, there is a good range of sports clubs, trips out of school and visitors into school. You also have some good ideas about how the school can improve.

Your headteacher and staff know exactly what needs to be done to make the school better. Here are the most important things that need to improve.

- Your teachers should help you improve your writing by providing you with more opportunities to write in other subjects.
- The staff should continue to link subjects together, particularly ICT to make what you learn even more interesting and exciting.
- Your teachers should check what is happening more in other classes and share all the good things they find so that they can learn from each other and get even better.

I feel certain that everyone at the school will continue to work hard to help you learn in the future. You have some challenging targets for 2007. Best wishes and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector