

Spalding Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120678
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291830
Inspection date	27 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Patricia Cox

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	381
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Sharman
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Scott
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Woolram Wygate Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 1PB
Telephone number	01775769445
Fax number	01775762786

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This large primary school is growing as more pupils join it, many of whom are from Eastern Europe and Poland in particular. A tenth of pupils does not have English as their first language, and most have little knowledge of the language when they start school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than the national average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. However, the school has recently begun to provide cooked meals and the number of pupils taking advantage of this is increasing. The attainment of the children when they start in Reception is generally similar to national expectations, although standards are higher in personal and social and mathematical development than in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school provides satisfactory value for money. It has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection, but more rapid improvement under the good leadership of the relatively new headteacher. She has a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the school and has introduced many appropriate initiatives to improve what it provides. For example, the role of senior leaders and subject coordinators is being developed. However, they are still at an early stage of taking the lead in improvements and therefore leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There is increasing teamwork in all areas of the school, demonstrating the school's sound capacity to improve further. Several measures have been introduced to improve the quality of teaching, for example the use of more rigorous assessment of pupils' progress to set work at an appropriate level for all abilities. While there are good examples of teaching, implementation of new strategies is inconsistent and teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers often set different levels of work for groups, but the tasks set for the more able aren't always sufficiently challenging. Consequently, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although there are variations within the subjects.

Children make sound progress in the Reception classes and standards are close to those expected by the time they enter Year 1. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 were broadly comparable with the national average in 2006. While this is likely to be a similar picture for Year 6 this year, attainment in Year 2 is lower because there has been a recent influx of pupils whose first language is not English. Progress in reading is good, and in science it is satisfactory. However, pupils do not do well enough in writing because they have insufficient opportunity to practise their skills. They make sound progress in acquiring basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT), but do not use these well enough through the curriculum because there are not enough resources.

The school provides good care for its pupils' physical and emotional needs and therefore they behave well and relationships between pupils and with adults are warm. As one pupil commented, 'This is a really caring school.' Their personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory and they are soundly prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives. The school is building up more information about pupils' attainment and progress and is using this with increasing effectiveness to target support for those who are falling behind. However, pupils are not given enough information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The process of setting targets for pupils to achieve is not developed sufficiently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise and develop their skills across the curriculum.
- Improve provision for ICT so that there are sufficient resources and that they are used in all subjects.
- Use the developing assessment systems to make sure that the work is matched to pupils' ability and to involve them more closely in understanding how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Build on the work already done to develop the role of the senior management team and subject coordinators so that they take a lead in checking the work of the school and bringing about improvements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children in Reception make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and particularly those where their attainment is not strong when they enter school, for example their knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have varied since 2002, having been similar to the national average in some years and above that in others. In 2006, standards at the end of Year 2 were average overall, although they were better in reading than in mathematics and, particularly, in writing. The results of these assessments have been falling since 2004 because attainment on entry has declined. At the end of Year 6 in 2006 standards were average, but higher in reading than writing. The pupils had made satisfactory progress since they took the national tests in Year 2, particularly in mathematics, and met the school's realistic targets. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress and those whose first language is not English acquire fluency at a reasonable rate. Some parents were concerned that their children were not making enough progress, particularly where there has been long-term staff illness. Nevertheless, the school is doing all in its power to ensure that the pupils concerned receive a reasonable quality of teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school is an orderly community and pupils behave well in lessons and around the building. Some parents expressed concern about behaviour, but pupils say that this has improved recently, and that there is little boisterousness or aggression. One pupil remarked that, 'there used to be some bullying but that's stopped now', and others agreed. Pupils are certain that if it were to occur it would be sorted out. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe and a sound understanding of a healthy lifestyle. The institution of the school council is a positive move which is helping pupils to become more involved in decisions that involve them, and members take their responsibilities seriously. Attendance is satisfactory and has declined recently but the school is working hard with the few families, particularly those new to this country, whose children do not attend regularly. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the cultures of those who have recently joined their school, but their understanding of a multicultural society is less well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The best teaching in the school is lively and enthusiastic, with teachers displaying good subject knowledge. These lessons proceed at a brisk pace and resources are used well. Teaching assistants are used well to support groups and individuals and are prepared well for their role. In all lessons, there are good relationships and discipline in classes and teachers usually plan their lessons thoroughly. They tell pupils what they are expected to learn during the lesson. Pupils enjoy most lessons, especially when teachers make them interesting, although they say that they are occasionally boring or not challenging enough. This comment reflects the inconsistencies in teaching, particularly the occasional slow pace of some lessons. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to use or develop their writing skills in English lessons or in other subjects. There is an overuse of worksheets in some subjects, which restricts pupils' ability to

set out their own work. Because the use of long-term and day-to-day assessment is a recent development, teachers do not always match their lessons closely enough to their pupils' attainment. Consequently, there are times when the more able are not challenged enough or when parts of the lesson move too rapidly for those whose first language is not English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy the visits and visitors who help to enliven the curriculum. There is a sound range of activities outside the school day, which many pupils take part in. However, the timetable is not organised to make the best use of time and some subjects receive less time than others. The school is aware that there are too few computers, and governors have already approved a significant improvement. There are also suitable plans to develop the rather limited outside area for the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good and pupils are sure that there is always someone who will help them if they are in trouble or upset. The necessary risk assessments are carried out and there are stringent checks on all those who work in the school. However, the school does not keep a central record of these checks and hence does not meet current government requirements. Academic guidance is not sufficiently effective. The school has made recent strides in putting together a range of information about standards and progress from, for example, test results and teachers' assessments. While there have been some improvements, teachers are not using this data sufficiently to set targets for pupils or to involve them in measuring their own progress. Marking is unsatisfactory: it rarely tells pupils how well they have met the aim of the lesson or what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

While the headteacher demonstrates good leadership, the role of others in leading the school is at an early stage and few take a lead in the drive for improvement. Nevertheless, there are signs of promise among some subject leaders in their enthusiasm and understanding of their roles. The headteacher has a good understanding of what needs doing because she has checked the work of the school carefully and her evaluations are reasonably rigorous. However, others in the school have been over-reliant on her and do not have a clear enough view of the school's effectiveness. Planning for school improvement is satisfactory. Although the priorities and actions are entirely appropriate, intended outcomes are not always specific and the plan is short term. Communication with parents is adequate and most parents are positive about the school's work. However, while there are many informative newsletters, a large minority of parents expressed concerns about the way that the school listened to them and their children, particularly about communication between parents and class teachers. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are involved well in the school, and their understanding of their role is improving.

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Annex A

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?	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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	4
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?	No
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 March 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Spalding Primary School, Woolram Wygate, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1PB

I was very pleased to meet so many of you when I visited the school recently and regret that I couldn't talk to more of you. I really enjoyed my conversations with the children I managed to see, because they were so polite and helpful. The children on the school council are trying really hard to do their job as well as possible.

I thought you would like to know what I found out and how you could help to make things better.

You told me that children behave well and I agree. You also told me that you enjoy school a lot, although there are times when the lessons aren't so interesting or are too easy for you. I've asked teachers to make sure that the lessons are just right so that you can all do as well as possible. You make satisfactory progress in most subjects and you do well with your reading, but I'm sure you could write a lot better. I've asked the school to make sure you have enough opportunity to write in subjects like history and religious education, instead of filling in so many worksheets. You can help by trying really hard to improve your writing and remember what you've been taught to do.

You have some interesting things to do, like the Reception children's visit to the Butterfly Park, but the school doesn't have enough computers for you to use as often as you need. You'll be pleased to know that your headteacher has told me that there will be some more in the future. The school is getting better in a lot of ways because your headteacher has a lot of good ideas but I would like the rest of the staff to come up with their own good ideas about how things could improve. One of the things they could do is to make sure you all have targets for your work. Then they could help you to see how well you were doing towards those targets and what you need to do to get better.

Thank you for helping to make my visit so enjoyable. My best wishes for the future.

Mrs Pat Cox

Inspector