



Caister on Sea First and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 120796
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291862
Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Joy Richardson

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Type of school | First | School address | Kingston Avenue |
| School category | Community | | Caister-on-Sea, Caister-on-Sea |
| Age range of pupils | 3–8 | | Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 5ET |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01493 728560 |
| Number on roll (school) | 371 | Fax number | 01493 721390 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Tracey Plunkett |
| | | Headteacher | Mr Brendan McCarney |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 June 2001 | | |

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| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
| 3–8 | 16–17 October 2006 | 291862 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a larger than average first school, sharing a site with the middle school to which most pupils transfer. The school has pupils from Caister and also from Great Yarmouth. The area it draws from is less well off than the average nationally. Children's attainment on entry is slightly below average. Most pupils are of White British background. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few children are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care. In 2008, the school is due to change from a first school to an infant school for children aged from three to seven.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Children thrive from the day they start because the school understands their needs and helps them to make excellent progress in their learning. The school focuses on achieving high standards and providing a rich and interesting education for all its pupils. It is not content to stand still and constantly reviews how well it is doing and how it could do even better.

Leadership is excellent at all levels and this is the secret of the school's success. The headteacher and assistant headteachers, leaders of year groups and subjects, class teachers, support staff and governors all contribute in taking the school forward. The partnership with parents is strong too. Parents have a high opinion of the school and this is well justified.

In Nursery and Reception, children get off to a flying start in their learning and personal development and have a lot of fun in the process. Across the school, standards have gone up steadily in recent years so that they are now well above the national average. The achievement of pupils is outstanding because they make exceptional progress over the years they spend in the school. This progress is the result of high quality teaching and excellent systems for checking pupils' learning. The staff are always ready to share ideas about teaching and how to make it more effective. They recognise that time could be used better in the introductions to some lessons, in order to challenge pupils to the full.

Teamwork across the school community is striking, and the children catch this spirit. As one child said, 'We all work together here'. This is evident in the mature way that children welcome newcomers, work sensibly in groups and behave well so that everyone can learn. They learn to be responsible. Older pupils strive for election as officers for the school council, and promise to abide by the rules they agree in their 'class charters'.

The children enjoy school hugely. They take great delight in the special events and activities that are provided, including the many clubs. The large lower and upper school choirs sing magnificently, and music invigorates school life. Pupils have many opportunities to perform in front of an audience, and they grow in confidence as a result.

The school values each individual, and the children respond well to the way that it looks for the best in each of them. There is exceptional care and support for vulnerable children and for those who find learning difficult. The school also celebrates and nurtures special talents. The children are proud of their school and of everything they achieve there. One child summed it up simply, 'It's a lovely place for learning'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Step up the pace in the introductions to lessons to challenge all pupils and maximise learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards have risen significantly since the time of the last inspection and are now well above average. The reason for this is that the school has come to expect much more from its pupils. It assesses their progress closely to find ways of helping them to do even better and to reach challenging targets. This leads to outstanding achievement.

Although children enter school with skills that are a little below average, they make excellent progress in Nursery and Reception. As a result, they reach standards by the end of this stage that are better than average in all the areas of learning. Pupils' attainment is built upon rapidly in the following years so that, by the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The pace of progress continues in Year 3 and pupils reach standards that are high for their age by the time they leave. Because pupils make so much progress over their time in school, they have strong foundations for the next stage of their education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school successfully promotes a strong ethos of mutual respect between adults and pupils. Pupils flourish in this environment where each individual is helped to play a full part within the school community. There are plenty of chances for pupils to work together and they become good at doing this. They appreciate the help they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils feel safe and comfortable at school. They learn about eating healthily and there is a wide range of popular physical activities that provide healthy exercise. Pupils' all-round spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. The pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in the arts, and to learn about the wider world. They develop a very strong sense of social responsibility, showing good manners and concern for others. Attendance is average. The school works hard to support families and to secure regular attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. A strong feature of lessons is the detailed planning that meets the needs of pupils at each stage of learning in each class. Pupils become confident learners because they are encouraged to discuss and to explain their ideas. Teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils and they use a variety of methods to inspire them. They have high expectations of behaviour and provide good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their learning at the end of lessons. Teachers make imaginative use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate learning. They deploy the very competent teaching assistants to help pupils to learn effectively.

Teachers support and learn from each other, identifying where learning could be better and adapting their teaching accordingly. This is seen in the successful introduction of sets in Year 3 to provide more focused challenge in numeracy, and in the adoption of effective strategies to raise boys' attainment in literacy. Pupils sometimes spend too much time on the carpet at the start of lessons, and the staff recognise that this time could, on occasions, be used more effectively. Teachers new to the school are introduced well to the school's procedures and expectations. All staff have a clear understanding of standards that pupils should be reaching. They are exceptionally effective in assessing pupils' learning and tracking their progress over time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is developed creatively to enrich pupils' learning. Focus weeks, such as the recent arts week, and the wide range of clubs and visits, including a residential visit for pupils in Year 3, all add to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Music is a strength, with exceptional singing and a wealth of musical opportunity for all pupils. An extremely stimulating learning environment is provided for children in the Foundation Stage. The school recognises that outdoor learning for the youngest children could be developed still further. Excellent links between subjects ensure that pupils have opportunities to practise their skills for a purpose. The school's success in building information and communication technology into the curriculum, and developing resources for this, has won national recognition. The school supports the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties. Around the school, high quality displays celebrate pupils' work and suggest how to find out more from the school's attractive and well-stocked library. A well-marked playground and 'Trim Trail' encourage pupils to be active.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school goes the extra mile in supporting all pupils, which is why they make such good progress. The school makes extremely good use of the 'lead behaviour professional' to support the most vulnerable pupils. An impressive awareness of child protection issues and highly effective liaison with other professionals adds to this positive picture. Pupils want to learn and they enjoy contributing to lessons because they are guided very effectively. They know the targets they are working towards and how to improve their work. Pupils are encouraged at the end of lessons to make their own assessment of how well they have learned. This helps them to take responsibility for their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and associate headteachers provide clear direction, building teamwork at all levels that is extremely

strong. Staff with management roles carry these out very effectively. The school's information and record keeping systems are extremely well managed in order to highlight and respond to needs. The tracking of pupils' progress is excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly and accurately monitored. This develops consistency, the sharing of good practice and tenacity in finding solutions to problems.

The school knows itself extremely well and is very effective in identifying priorities for improvement. The views of all members of the school community are taken into consideration. Governors are intent on making sure that all children get the best education possible. They have their finger on the pulse and make well-informed decisions. The school provides excellent value for money. It has dealt fully with issues from the previous inspection. Because of the wholehearted commitment of staff and governors, the school's capacity for further improvement is exceptionally strong.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| 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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| 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

18 October 2006

Dear Children

Caister on Sea First and Nursery School, Kingston Avenue, Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk. NR30 5ET

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for telling us all about it. You are proud of your school and the teachers are proud of you. We understand why. Caister on Sea First and Nursery School is an excellent school.

We noticed how polite and friendly you are. We think that you are sensible and grown up in the way that you talk about your work and explain your ideas. You behave well and listen to other people. This helps everyone to learn.

You told us that the staff take good care of you and help you when you find the work hard. All the adults in the school work together as a team and they show you how to do this too, so that you get on well with each other and help to look after the school.

You are lucky to have so many clubs and visitors, and special things to do. The choirs are brilliant and we enjoyed hearing the whole school singing so well. You are good at reading and writing, and working with numbers too.

You try hard and we were interested to see you using the 'traffic lights' to decide how well you had done. Your teachers are good at finding ways to help you learn even better and we enjoyed talking to them about their ideas. We think that sometimes you could learn more in the time you spend on the carpet at the start of lessons.

We are sure that you will go on doing your very best and we think that you are lucky to be at such a good school.

Joy Richardson

Lead Inspector