



Sprowston First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120853
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291882
Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Robert McKeown HMI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Recreation Ground Road
School category	Community		Sprowston, Sprowston
Age range of pupils	4–8		Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8EW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01603 429001
Number on roll (school)	236	Fax number	01603 485461
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs C Jackson
		Headteacher	Ms L Wayman
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

Age group 4–8	Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007	Inspection number 291882
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out over two days by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Sprowston First School is an average size community primary school situated to the north of Norwich, in Norfolk. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. One pupil is at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is typical for this size of school. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. Children start school with skills and standards which match those expected for their age. The school has recently gained the local authority Early Years achievement mark. The headteacher has led the school for five years. In September 2007 the school will become an infant school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sprowston First School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Parents' views of the school are mostly positive and many parents are pleased with the education their children receive. Some aspects of the school's work are good and improvements have been made since the last inspection. The school achieves satisfactory value for money.

One of the successes of the school is the strong commitment to pupils' personal development. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe when they are there. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Behaviour is good and staff provide a high level of care and support. The school gives suitable prominence to the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Participation in class and school council discussions enable pupils to become involved in decision making and good links with other schools help prepare older pupils well for the future.

Standards and achievement are satisfactory overall. They are good in the Foundation Stage where the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. The school does not capitalise fully on the good start children receive in the Reception classes and in Year 1. Progress in the older classes is mostly satisfactory. Although many pupils reach the expected level by the end of Year 2, there are not enough pupils reaching the higher Levels 2b and 3. Suitable emphasis is given to ensuring pupils with lower ability make good progress. The school acknowledges that more able pupils could achieve more and reach higher standards.

The quality of teaching while never less than satisfactory is not consistently good in the older classes. More challenge is needed in some lessons to help pupils achieve higher standards. Improvements and greater consistency are also required in teachers' assessments and marking. Regular monitoring of lessons with detailed feedback would help improve the overall quality of lessons. The curriculum is good and engages pupils in a range of interesting and enjoyable learning activities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and staff work well together to provide a very caring and supportive environment in which pupils feel happy and secure. Communication with parents is good. Subject leadership teams have been established but have yet to have an impact on improving the quality of provision or raising standards. Further improvements are required in target setting and tracking pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics. The school's self evaluation of its effectiveness is satisfactory but more positive than some judgements made by inspectors. Governors give the school satisfactory support. The capacity for further improvement is secure.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teaching is suitably challenging to enable all pupils to reach their capabilities.
- Sharpen and improve the consistency of teachers' assessment and marking and engage pupils more in assessing their own learning.

- Track pupils' progress more thoroughly, particularly in mathematics by setting targets for pupils' achievement and monitoring progress towards achieving them.
- Strengthen the role played by leaders and managers in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. Progress for children in the Foundation Stage is good. This is because teachers plan well matched learning experiences for all children. The Foundation Stage Profile for 2006 indicated that standards at the end of Reception were above the local authority and national averages in all six areas of learning. Boys and girls' achievements were similar except in communication, language and literacy, where girls did better. The school does not capitalise fully on the good start children receive in Reception. In 2006, pupils' attainment in Year 2 was below that seen nationally at the higher levels. Performance in reading was better than it was in writing and mathematics. Action taken by the school to improve the teaching of phonics, and to help some pupils to catch up in reading, has been successful. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and the one pupil at the early stages of learning English is good. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were in line with national levels. Standards and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is satisfactory, although too many pupils arrive late for school. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and will be dealt with promptly. The school has recently held an anti bullying week to reinforce the importance of good relationships and staying safe. Pupils are also aware that making racist remarks is unacceptable and that they should report any they hear. Pupils are aware of the importance of eating healthy foods and taking exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Changes to the curriculum have helped pupils gain a better understanding of some world religions, languages and other cultures. Assemblies engage pupils well and give them a chance for reflection. In class discussions and personal, social and health education lessons, pupils are also able to reflect on their actions and how these affect others. School council members organise fundraising events and consider ways of improving the school environment. Pupils learn to help others by raising funds for international charities, such as sponsoring a child in Haiti.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Across the school teaching is satisfactory. Some teaching is good and none is inadequate. Teaching is better in Reception and Year 1 and this is where pupils make more progress. In the best lessons activities are well matched to pupils' needs and this is usually linked to more effective assessment. In these lessons teachers make good use of resources, practical aids and ICT to support learning. Relationships are good and, as a result, pupils behave well and enjoy their lessons. In the weaker lessons, pupils are not always as engaged in their learning and teaching does not fully challenge the brightest pupils. The way teachers assess pupils' work varies between classes. This is evident during lessons as well as in the quality of marking in pupils' books. The school recognises this as well as the need to set challenging individual targets in Years 1, 2 and 3 to help pupils build on their earlier learning. Pupils are not often encouraged to evaluate their own work or that of others in the class. The presentation and handwriting in older pupils' books requires improvement. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed. They give good support for pupils with learning difficulties particularly when dealing with individuals and small groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is carefully organised to ensure a smooth transition from the successful Foundation Stage and to give continuity through Years 1, 2 and 3. It is based on a programme of integrated topics. These cover all the required subjects with particular emphasis on English and mathematics, and provide a range of interesting experiences including Spanish. New developments such as the installation of interactive whiteboards have improved provision in ICT. A good range of popular and often over-subscribed clubs are offered after school which successfully develop pupils' interests and skills. In addition, pupils take part in a number of interesting visits. These, along with events such as the creative arts afternoons, add to the richness of the activities provided. Provision for pupils with lower attainment and those with learning difficulties is good. This enables them to make good and sometimes very good progress, particularly in reading. The school is beginning to explore ways of improving provision for more able pupils and pupils with particular talents, for example through the recent film making experience provided for a group of pupils in Year 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and secure environment. Pupils are well cared for and the support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants makes an important contribution to their learning. Safeguarding pupils, child protection and health and safety procedures are securely in place and vulnerable pupils are quickly identified

and supported effectively. The school works well with other agencies to ensure that wherever necessary pupils and their families get the help they need. Parents generally are appreciative of the care and guidance given to their children. In Reception, teachers set individual targets to help pupils improve their social skills as well as make progress in their learning. Older pupils do not get this sort of guidance. Individual education plans provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties, particularly in reading, and clear and helpful advice for teaching assistants. However, they rarely focus on helping pupils to improve their mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher leads and manages the school effectively. The school has experienced many changes in the last year including changes in staff and the impending change of school status. New staff settle in well and are given suitable support by their colleagues. Good leadership is provided by the Foundation Stage leader who shares her expertise with other schools. The special educational needs coordinator manages the support programmes for pupils with learning difficulties well. Performance management is in place but too few formal observations of teaching and learning are carried out by the headteacher and senior leaders to enable them to secure improvements in the overall quality of teaching and learning. Further improvements are required in target setting and tracking pupils' progress so that leaders and managers can set challenging targets and identify how much progress pupils are making in each class. There are good links established with other schools and play groups through learning network and transition activities. A useful, recently produced governor information booklet sets out governors' responsibilities and priorities. Although some governors visit the school regularly, visit records do not record what questions governors might ask to promote a discussion on school improvement. Governors believe that they need to know more about how well pupils are doing as they move through the school.

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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	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	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?	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?	3
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	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 January 2007

Dear Children

Sprowston First School, Recreation Ground Road, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 8EW

Thank you for helping us with our inspection work when we visited your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you.

We enjoyed talking to you about the things you do at Sprowston. The school council has some good ideas for helping others and for improving the school environment. We thought your behaviour was good and you listened well in assemblies. There are lots of interesting things for you to do in lessons and in the school clubs. We like the ideas of having creative afternoons, learning to speak Spanish and finding out about life in other countries. We are pleased that you know that bullying is not acceptable and that it is better to care for each other and be friendly. Ms Wayman and all the adults clearly care for you very well and want you to be successful.

At the end of the inspection, we asked your teachers to make sure that you all learn as much as you can in lessons. We also asked them to get you thinking and talking about how you can improve your work. We asked Ms Wayman to keep a check on how well you are doing in your lessons and keep a close eye on your progress from year to year, especially in mathematics.

You have a lot to look forward to in the rest of the year, I hope you enjoy it.

With best wishes,

Rob McKeown

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools