

The Brigg Infant School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 112623 |
| Local Authority | DERBYSHIRE LA |
| Inspection number | 310953 |
| Inspection dates | 4–5 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Martin Newell |

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

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 164 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Barry Thacker |
| Headteacher | Mrs Isobel Martin |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 May 2005 |
| School address | 39 South Street South Normanton Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 2DA |
| Telephone number | 01773 811317 |
| Fax number | 01773 862953 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized infant school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need are both similar to the national average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and of the very small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, none are at an early stage of acquiring English.

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: 2

The Brigg is a good school with some outstanding aspects and rightly deserves the reputation it holds with parents and the local community. Parents think highly of the school and one comment, reflected by many, 'A caring, welcoming school where children get off to a great start', sums up much of what the school is all about. Inspection findings fully endorse the school's view of its own effectiveness. Under the very good leadership of the headteacher, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The school has a very good track record of introducing initiatives and strategies that make a difference to how well pupils learn and achieve. This, together with a shared commitment from all staff and governors to make the school even better, are a winning combination that clearly illustrates the school's continued capacity to make this vision a reality.

Attainment when pupils start school is below national expectations. The standards that pupils reach by the time that they leave school are currently a little above average although boys' writing standards are not as good as the girls. The important fact is that across the school, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, make good progress and achieve well. A number of factors contribute to this, not least of which is the good quality teaching that consistently ensures that pupils make good strides in their learning. This is often because work is carefully matched to the differing abilities of pupils and because the fun and exciting lessons captures and maintains their interest. Another key strength also lies in the quality of assessment and target setting. Teachers and teaching assistants have a very good grasp of what pupils can and cannot do and regularly set and review challenging targets for all pupils. Pupils' knowledge of their own targets is impressive.

A great strength of the school is the pupils. They are well-behaved and enthusiastic learners who love coming to school. A fact that is not reflected in the below average attendance rates. Pupils demonstrate an excellent awareness of what is needed to follow healthy lifestyles and a good sense of their own and others' safety. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community and develop key skills that equip them well for their future lives. The curriculum is good. It helps pupils to enjoy school, to achieve well and a wide array of enrichment activities help bring learning to life. The school is seeking to provide more activities to stimulate a greater interest, creativity and confidence in writing, particularly for boys. Care and guidance are outstanding. Pupils' pastoral care is afforded a very high priority, equality is actively promoted and the academic guidance for pupils is excellent and impacts significantly on their progress and achievement.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The headteacher's very effective leadership is firmly rooted in providing a high quality of education and care for all pupils. All staff and governors work together extremely well to make this come to fruition through effective monitoring, rigorous self-evaluation and the use of challenging targets to bring about and sustain improvements in standards and pupil achievement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. They enjoy learning with the help of very caring adults who maintain excellent teamwork and guide them very sensitively. The quality of planning and the use of assessment are very good; rigorous

systems mean that pupils' needs are identified quickly and teaching is adapted to tailor learning effectively. The indoor and outdoor areas are used extensively and this benefits children's learning very well. Occasionally opportunities to develop the language skills of the less able pupils are not always seized upon. The good management of provision and the excellent links with parents help pupils to settle quickly into school routines and to enjoy school from the outset.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide a wide range of activities, resources, stimuli and skills that enable boys in particular, to develop as good and confident writers.
- Continue to work with parents and carers to improve attendance rates.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment when pupils start at the school is below average, particularly in their communication and social skills. Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception classes and by the time they are ready to start in Year 1, standards are close to national expectations. This good start is systematically built on in Years 1 and 2 and the good achievement continues. This culminates in standards being a little above the national average by the time that pupils leave the school, although boys' writing standards lag behind those of the girls. The consistently good teaching, well-planned intervention strategies, robust assessment and challenging target setting are all factors that play pivotal roles in the good progress made by pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and behave well and show good attitudes to learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and are increasing their knowledge of cultures other than their own. Pupils develop strong skills for their future well-being through their good progress in literacy, numeracy and computer work. They manage risks in their life well and have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy by eating well and taking part in a good range of physical activities. Attendance is below average, despite the school's concerted efforts to help families understand that holidays taken during term-time adversely affect pupils' learning. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the local community by caring for their environment, participation in local events and helping to raise money for charities. They relish the many responsibilities they are given, such as monitors for fruit and water bottles, registers, assemblies and other duties, and carry them out with great maturity and assurance.

Pupils also act very responsibly as members of the school council and by helping others as 'Playground Friends' during lunchtimes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and add much to the strong sense of pupil achievement that permeates through the school. Across the school, relationships are very good and effective

class management is generally a strong feature of many lessons. Work is often challenging and fun and captivates the interest of the pupils. In many lessons, staff go the extra-mile to ensure that activities are well matched to the differing abilities of the pupils. Just occasionally, these features are not in evidence or teachers do not gain the full attention of pupils when making very valid teaching points. Teaching assistants are valued members of the school community and make a significant contribution to pupils' good progress. Assessment is a key strength of the school and teachers use the information very well to guide and inform their planning and teaching. Marking, particularly in writing, is usually good because it gives pupils clear and concise pointers of how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils have access to a good curriculum that includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum for Years 1 and 2. Personal, social and health education is promoted very well through a very good programme of activities that include 'circle time' and many opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of keeping fit, safe and healthy. Teachers make good use of computers, interactive whiteboards and other technology, across different subjects, to bring learning to life. The school has rightly identified the need to introduce more drama, role-play and other activities and initiatives to help raise standards and achievement in writing, particularly for boys. Pupils who find learning difficult are provided with excellent support to help them join in with all the activities. A good range of visits, visitors and after-school activities enrich the curriculum and clubs includes football, French and recorders. The school uses every millimetre of its limited accommodation to the greatest advantage of its pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support for all the pupils. The health, safety and welfare of pupils are of high importance and the school complies with all its legal requirements for safeguarding them. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are given very close support in lessons so that they benefit greatly from the help they receive. Pastoral care is excellent. A significant strength of the school is the way in which staff work together as a very effective team. All adults have the best interests of the pupils at heart and they strive to help them in every way they can. The school works exceedingly well with outside agencies to provide specialist help where necessary, and links with parents are very strong. Academic guidance is excellent. Pupils have very clear targets for their work and given their young age, they have an excellent awareness of their individual targets and goals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and contribute much to the many successes of the school. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has moulded together a team of very supportive staff who share her vision to make the school even better. The contributions of all who work at the school are recognised and valued. There is no sense of complacency as evidenced by the wide number of intervention and support strategies such as 'Reading Recovery' and other initiatives which are evaluated for the impact on standards and achievement. Good procedures are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning that have brought about

sustained improvements. Procedures for analysing test and assessment data are equally good but the headteacher has accurately identified the need for all teachers to play a more proactive role in this process. Governors are very supportive yet ready to ask challenging and searching questions. They know the school well. Links with subject leaders are not as strong as they could be to give governors an even better awareness of the performance of the school.

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Annex A

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 |
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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? | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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? | 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| 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

6 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of The Brigg Infant School, 39 South Street, South Normanton, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 2DA.

You may remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. However, before I do, I would just like to say a big thank you for making us feel so welcome. I have told your teachers how polite, helpful you were, and that you made our visit one that we will remember. We had the chance to talk to quite a number of you and it was good to hear how much you enjoy school, how adults listen to your views and how there is always someone to turn to if you have any problems.

By now, you are probably eager to know what we found in your school! I am happy to say, that, we found it to be a good school with some outstanding features. The good teaching helps you to do well and make good progress in your learning. All the adults care for you exceptionally well and help to make learning fun both inside the class and through the visits, visitors and after school clubs. The school is well led by Mrs Martin, senior staff and governors and all adults are quick at spotting areas for improvement that help you do even better. Another important strength of the school is you! The way you behave, your enthusiasm, your knowledge of keeping fit and healthy and how you are ready to help out in school, are just some shining examples.

However, even schools like yours can do some things better. With this in mind, we have asked the teachers to help improve writing standards further, particularly for the boys. Secondly, we have asked the school to continue to work with your parents and carers to improve how regularly some of you attend school, so that you do not miss any of the exciting learning activities on offer. Having met you all we know you will continue to play your part by working hard and behaving well. We wish you every success with your futures. It was a pleasure and privilege to meet you.

Martin Newell

Lead inspector