

Bottesford Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117780
Local Authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	312701
Inspection date	13 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr John Dickinson
Headteacher	Mrs Vilma Orchard
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2004
School address	Manor Road Bottesford Scunthorpe DN16 3PB
Telephone number	01724 862483
Fax number	01724 851839

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1; the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance throughout the school; the quality and impact of the school's self-evaluation at all levels of management. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, analysis of pupils' work, performance data, parents' questionnaire returns, the school's documentation and from discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This large infant school caters for pupils from mixed socio-economic backgrounds, although very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are from White British families; a few are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has had some instability in headship in the last three years. The present headteacher was appointed in January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents rightly praise the outstanding level of care for their children and are pleased about the good progress they make. The welcoming atmosphere, the approachability of staff and the effective teaching mean that pupils thoroughly enjoy school and work hard. They also benefit from an excellent start in the Reception year. The school has undergone an unsettled period of headship and it is to the school's credit that any disruption has been minimised. The new headteacher has shown very good leadership in harnessing and redirecting the energies of all staff and in ensuring that standards are back to their usual level.

Standards by Year 2 had been consistently above average in recent years but were declining and were average in 2007. Because of new tracking systems and sharply targeted teaching, there is every indication that standards will return to be above average in reading, writing and mathematics this year. This represents good achievement for all pupils when account is taken of their broadly typical development on entry to the Reception year. The progress they make in their communication and writing skills is particularly good. Pupils whose first language is not English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well and this underlines the inclusiveness of the school.

Achievement is good because of the consistently good teaching and an effective curriculum across the school. Every classroom is a hive of activity in which pupils' respect for their teachers means that they work productively whether with an adult or on their own. Teachers are well organised and plan well so that lessons run smoothly. Teaching assistants are supportive, marking is pertinent and appreciated by pupils and, most importantly, teachers mostly set the right level of challenge for the abilities of pupils. There is a good focus on literacy and numeracy but teachers do not maximise opportunities to develop these skills through other subjects. Pupils themselves said they would prefer greater diversity in literacy and numeracy lessons. They certainly enjoy all the extra activities on offer, including the visit to the local organic farm during the inspection, from which they returned tired but fulfilled.

Pupils' personal development is good, especially in acquiring a work ethic and a sense of spirituality and self-worth. Concentration levels are high in lessons and pupils interact well with one another to solve problems or seek advice. They are thoughtful individuals, encouraged to reflect on personal and other issues by teachers. They develop a sense of wonder, as seen in the 'Living Eggs' project and the hatching of chicks in the school. It is no surprise that their attendance is routinely above average. Behaviour is good. Pupils admit that some behave foolishly at times. They say, in the same breath, that they feel secure and have every trust in the adults. Parents endorse this. Pupils are keen to adopt a healthy lifestyle; they are very active although they do not quite understand the nature of a balanced diet. Their contribution to the school, through the school council and other responsibilities, is good and there are useful links with the wider community through, for example, a project on The Gambia. For their age, pupils develop commendable maturity and are at ease with themselves. As a result, they are well prepared for life ahead.

The quality of care and support for pupils is excellent, a 'hidden strength' as one parent said. The formal systems for safeguarding are robustly in place, including child protection and risk assessments. The pastoral care is understandably valued by parents and individual issues are dealt with sensitively and successfully. Parents appreciate the school's handling of those children

with a medical condition. The school's first aid room is testament to its focus on care and good links with outside agencies support this.

The headteacher has made a strong impact in her short time at the school. She has swiftly understood the school's strengths and is respectful of them. She identified that standards could be raised by establishing more rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress. This very good system has been readily assimilated by staff and is already beneficial. Teachers can now target support more skilfully; informal guidance is sharply focused and helpful in moving pupils forward. Other improvements, for example to the accommodation, are also in hand. The leadership by other senior staff is good and has kept the school on an even keel during an unsettled period. The school knows itself well and the current priorities are appropriate. However, its self-evaluation has only recently been formalised. Governors have not been rigorous in the past in ensuring that this process was fully functioning and in questioning the decline in standards. There is no doubt that governors are supportive of the school and work hard but their monitoring is not sufficiently organised for them to play a full part in the school's development.

The school has done well to maintain its quality since the last inspection, including standards and achievement. All issues raised in the last report have been addressed. The common sense of purpose in all staff, the rising standards and strengthening of procedures mean that the school has good capacity to improve and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children benefit from an excellent start in the Reception year and make outstanding progress. They have skills and abilities that are typical of four-year-olds when they enter school, although their early writing skills are weak. By the end of the year, nearly all children reach levels expected for their age and most exceed them, even in writing. Provision is excellent because of the high expectations, considerable care and stimulating opportunities that inspire children, help them mature rapidly and enable them to develop a thirst for learning. An imaginary day trip to Hawaii, for instance, complete with simulated air travel, demonstrates the diversity of experiences and the scope to develop language, social skills and an awareness of the wider world. Teaching is outstanding, especially because assessment is very thorough and enables teachers to provide learning that closely matches the individual's preferred learning style. The team of teachers and support staff work as a tightly knit unit so that children benefit from close support, although there are occasions when children would learn more quickly with clearer guidance. The Foundation Stage is led extremely well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the monitoring role of senior managers and, in particular, the governing body.
- Provide more scope for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy through other subjects.

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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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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

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	2
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	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

14 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bottesford Infant School, North Lincolnshire, DN16 3PB

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all. You were so welcoming and friendly and really helped me to get to know your school in such a short time.

I agree with you that yours is a good school. You have an excellent start in the Reception classes and you continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. You do well in your assessments in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics because your teachers are good, the work is mostly interesting and challenging and you work hard. I was impressed by the way in which you just get on with your work in class. The school has recently helped you more by setting targets and showing you how to improve your work and, as a result, your standards are improving.

The school takes excellent care of you, whatever your needs. You really appreciate this and feel safe and sound in school. You also behave well and get on together well. I especially liked the thoughtful and sensible way you lead your lives, helped by chances to think about things in life. I am sure you were inspired by the chicks that hatched in your school, and I know the slide show in assembly lifted your spirits. You lead active, healthy lives and are keen to help the school community and beyond through, for example, your fund-raising. You are well prepared for your next school.

All the staff have good ideas to make your school even better. I have asked the senior teachers and governors to do their best to make sure that you always get the best deal. I have also asked teachers to improve your literacy and numeracy skills by teaching them using other subjects and activities.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector