

Surfleet Seas End Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120419
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	313608
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	71
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steven Larner
Headteacher	Mrs Dawn Neal
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Station Road Surfleet Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 4DB
Telephone number	01775680373
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than usual village school which federated with Weston St Mary's Primary School in September 2008. The headteacher has been in post since then. She is also headteacher for the partner school and splits her week between the two schools. Each school has a separate governing body, but there are five governors with responsibility for the federation of the two schools. There has been a significant change of staff within the last two years. Higher percentages of children move into and leave the school between the Reception Year and Year 6 than in most schools.

After the Reception Year, children learn in mixed age classes. The percentage of children with learning difficulties varies from year to year but is typically about average in the school as a whole. Nevertheless, in some year groups the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. There are fewer minority ethnic children than typical nationally, and very few who are learning English as an additional language. Children join the Reception Year with knowledge and skills that are broadly average for their age.

The school has gained the Activemark in recognition of its physical education work and achieved Healthy Schools status in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and improvements are gathering pace this term. The new headteacher has a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The work of the new senior team has already had a positive impact. Improvements to the environment include brighter corridors to display children's work and a re-located library increases access and space for children. Improved computer provision is supporting learning in different subjects and contributing to children's good level of enjoyment. An effective system for checking how well children are doing, begun last year, has developed further this term. Staff and governors are at an early stage of developing their skills in analysing the information generated by this system. The development of gathering and analysing clear information about children's progress is instrumental in holding everyone increasingly to account. The willingness of staff and governors to become involved and support the school's development means that it has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The headteacher has made strategic decisions to make best use of strengths within the staff team and this is improving teaching. She and the senior teacher are currently reviewing how to distribute responsibilities across the schools in order to ensure effective and continued school development. Leadership and management is, therefore, satisfactory overall.

The curriculum provides satisfactorily for children's steady acquisition of knowledge but does not deepen their understanding or accelerate their development of skills as much as possible. The headteacher has recognised this. She has encouraged a positive start in curriculum development by freeing up timetables and giving teachers and children time to explore themes such as 'art and display' or 'the Great Fire of London'. While this is increasing links between subjects there is more to be done in this respect to enrich children's learning further. Standards fluctuate significantly from year to year because of differences in children's needs and abilities. Most typically, children leave school with broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Children in Year 6 currently are on track to leave with above average standards in all tested subjects and have made satisfactory progress given their starting points. The headteacher has accurately identified relative weaknesses in writing in recent test results. Consequently, staff are focusing on strengthening the teaching of writing, with a wider range of teaching approaches. It is too soon for the full impact of this to be evident in standards and achievement.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Developments this term include teachers making better use of assessment information to plan to meet differing needs within their class. While satisfactory, expectations, pace and challenge are not consistently high enough to accelerate children's learning. Teachers are sharing information with children more, so they understand better what they are aiming for. However, recently introduced individual targets for children in English and mathematics are not used consistently, so their impact on children's learning is variable. Because of the newness of systems for checking children's progress over time and because of the inconsistencies in the use of individual targets with children, care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Relationships between adults and children are good. Children are entirely confident that adults are there to help them and say, 'there is always someone to go to'. Good pastoral care contributes to children's good personal development.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Staff have embraced the latest requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Good leadership and management have secured rapid improvements in provision this term. The co-ordinator rightly recognised the necessity of organising both the indoor and outside environment and improving resources to support independent learning. This process began well before the beginning of term, and this prompt action ensured good provision from the moment children arrived. Teaching and learning are good. Staff understand the importance of young children feeling secure before they can learn, so they pay good attention to their welfare. Gaining a close understanding of children's social and personal needs when children first join the class is a priority. They ensure that children have good opportunities to move freely from learning indoors to outside and to learn independently as well as with an adult. These strengths contribute to children becoming happy and confident learners who are justifiably proud of their successes.

Both the teacher and the teaching assistant make close observations of children's achievements and record these in an accessible format for parents. They use their observations of children effectively to adjust plans to take account of children's prior attainment and, increasingly, their areas of interest. Staff recognise that they tend to over-direct and are still adjusting to their roles as facilitators. There is a good focus on developing children's key skills. Early literacy work with the teacher is characterised by high expectations. Consequently, at this stage in the year, evidence indicates that children currently in the reception class are on track to exceed expectations for their age in key skills, such as writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase staff and governors' skills in rigorously evaluating how well children are doing over time.
- Ensure that as the curriculum develops it makes more links between subjects and ensures progression in children's skills.
- Ensure that teachers provide children with consistently useful, relevant and individual guidance for improvement.
- Share best practice to ensure that expectations and challenge for children are consistently high

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children of all abilities, including those who find learning difficult, and those who join the school after the Reception Year, make satisfactory progress. When teachers plan with higher expectations of what children will achieve and, therefore, greater challenge, children make good progress in lessons. Consequently, children in Year 6 are currently on track to make good progress in all tested subjects this year. Given their starting points, children typically make satisfactory progress at both key stages. In 2008, by the end of Year 2, they reached broadly average standards in reading and mathematics assessments, but below average in writing. By the end of Year 6 standards were below average in English, broadly average in mathematics

and average in science. The school is rightly focusing on improving standards in writing throughout the school and this is evident in children's work but it is too soon for the full impact to be apparent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children have positive attitudes to learning. They like their teachers and work hard. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development is good. While satisfactory, their cultural development is not better because it is not embedded in the curriculum. Children demonstrate impressive tolerance for, and a mature understanding of, those children who have difficulty conforming to the school's expectations. They value the diversity that exists within their school community. Children appreciate qualities such as loyalty, perseverance and consideration. They have a good understanding of choices available to them concerning staying safe and healthy. Older children demonstrate this with thoughtful and reasoned arguments about, for example, the pros and cons of eating chocolate or playing computer games. They behave responsibly in lessons and around school as well as when they are conducting a role as a school councillor or 'friendship buddy'. Their good personal development and satisfactory academic achievement prepares them soundly for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Staff praise and encourage children so they are motivated to learn. They use interactive white boards successfully to add interest for children and to help them focus. Teaching assistants provide discreet and helpful support for children experiencing difficulty, which enables them to learn at a similar rate to their peers. While planning has improved this term, and supports satisfactory learning, teachers do not always grasp opportunities to challenge all children fully. Teachers routinely 'set the scene' for children by sharing the purpose of the lesson and refer to the key learning intention when they are marking children's work. Children find this helpful. However, marking rarely identifies what children need to do next and even more rarely refers to children's individual targets. The school has just begun to share best practice in teaching but this is not frequent and systematic. The school has begun to broaden teaching strategies to improve writing, such as the use of drama to inspire children's ideas before they begin writing. These are showing early signs of success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements and is planned to ensure satisfactory progression from year to year. Children's needs are recognised with a suitable emphasis upon key literacy, numeracy and social skills. Good use is made of new systems that check progress to provide focused intervention for children who are struggling with literacy. This is too new for the full impact to be apparent. Special provision for the highest attaining children is through special events or clubs, rather than embedded in their day-to-day lessons. The school has begun to explore ways of adding interest and relevance for children by making more links between subjects, but this is at an early stage. Children appreciate the improved provision of information and communication technology resources and improving their skills because of this. A good variety

of sport opportunities contribute to children's fitness levels, both during the school day and in after-school clubs through sports partnerships and links with Boston football club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good because there is a strong sense of community within the school and staff know children very well. Their social and emotional needs are quickly identified and considerable support is offered to children facing difficult circumstances. These strengths contribute to children's good personal development. Procedures for safeguarding children's welfare meet the latest requirements. Academic guidance is satisfactory. New systems both at a strategic level and through day-to-day routines are sound. While they have begun to have a positive impact, for example in providing 'booster groups' for children who need extra help, they are at an early stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior team has made a good start to improving teaching and learning. The federation and its plans for increased links between the two partner schools are at a early stage. As a newly federated school, it is still developing its links with parents and the wider community. However, governors and senior staff have a clear focus on improving provision and raising standards. Plans include sharing staff expertise more effectively across the two schools in order to develop staff responsibility for evaluating the school's work. The headteacher and senior teacher have introduced sensible systems and procedures for generating suitable priorities to secure continued school improvement. Staff feel enabled to make a positive contribution to the school. Governors have a realistic view of the school and its challenges. They are in a good position to embrace the new opportunities available to them to hold the school more rigorously to account.

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
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Surfleet Seas End Primary School, Surfleet, Lincolnshire PE11 4DB

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you, hearing your ideas and seeing your work.

Many of you said that 'everyone is friendly' in your school and I agree. I was pleased to see how kind you are to each other. I was especially impressed to see how understanding you are when other children have difficulties and this means they sometimes misbehave. It was interesting to hear you explain your ideas about whether eating chocolate is a good idea or not and you showed how well you could see both sides of an argument. I know you are glad about the changes this term: I was pleased to hear how much you appreciate the new computers and enjoy doing more drama and role-play, before you start writing. It was also good to hear how much you enjoy all your sports activities. You feel safe and enjoy school, you work hard in lessons and this helps you make the progress you should.

Some lessons are more exciting than others and you have to think harder in them. I have asked the teachers to work together even more to make sure they share the best ideas to help you always do the best you can. I have asked all the teachers and governors to become more involved in working out how well you are doing from term to term. I know you find it helpful when teachers tell you that you have achieved the learning objective on a piece of work. I have asked them to remember to mention your literacy and numeracy targets, and also give you an idea what your 'next steps' should be. You could help by checking your targets yourself. I know that you have been glad to have more time to get involved in learning about things like the Great Fire of London this term. I have asked the headteacher and the other teachers to make sure you have more chances to learn by studying something where you use different skills and different subjects.

I am sure you will try to help the school to become even better by continuing to work hard and always doing your best. Thank you again for helping me to understand your school. I wish you every success in the future.

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector