

Lutton St Nicholas Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120421
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313609
Inspection dates	31 January –1 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Diane Howard
Headteacher	Mrs Jan Stillwell
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003
School address	Marriots Gate Lutton Spalding PE12 9HN
Telephone number	01406363392
Fax number	01406364137

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Lutton St Nicholas Primary School is situated in a small village in the fens of Lincolnshire. Pupils are admitted between the ages of 4 and 11, with approximately two-thirds coming from outside the village. There are 87 pupils on roll, taught in three mixed-age classes. Approximately a quarter of pupils have special educational needs, which is above the national average. This figure has risen over the past three years. No pupils have a statement of special educational need. Almost all pupils are of White British background. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Attainment levels on entry are in line with the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Lutton St. Nicholas Primary is a satisfactory and improving school that provides satisfactory value for money. The school has emerged from a difficult period of temporary leadership and staff changes in recent years. Standards are beginning to rise because of the good leadership and direction provided by the headteacher since her appointment in January 2007. The clear direction for improvement that she provides is resulting in a common understanding of the school's key priorities and closer teamwork in driving them forward. Greater attention to promoting good standards of behaviour and a positive environment for learning has improved pupils' personal development and well-being. Parents say that they are pleased with the school's work, reflected in their children's good attitudes and behaviour, improving attendance and enjoyment of school life.

Pupils reach broadly satisfactory standards and achievement is sound. There has been some recent progress, for example in writing, but opportunities for pupils to work independently are rather limited. Pupils' mathematics skills are satisfactory, but they do not have effective opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in lessons across the school. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes better. Occasionally, teaching does not fully meet the needs of all pupils and so they are not always challenged successfully.

Pupils' personal development is good. They readily take responsibilities such as being school councillors and 'playground buddies'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reasonable. They know how to keep themselves safe effectively. The satisfactory curriculum provides pupils with sound skills for their future lives and has some good features, including popular additional activities, visitors and visits.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school accurately assesses where it needs to do better and the newly formed senior management team is committed to driving school priorities forward. However, the role of middle managers is currently underdeveloped, and subject leaders lack a secure overview of their subjects across the school as monitoring has been rather limited. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. The chair of governors is committed to the school and knows it well, but the governing body has not effectively held the school to account for its underachievement in recent years.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Progress is satisfactory and children enter Key Stage 1 with expected levels of attainment. Children's personal development is good, and they show a strong sense of social maturity and care for each other. They enjoy school, and they learn to play and work productively. Arrangements for the children's transition from a range of nursery settings are satisfactory and children settle into classroom routines. Although the curriculum meets the children's needs, the outdoor area is not fully developed and is not used well to extend learning. Assessment information is used satisfactorily to match tasks to the needs of individuals. Links with parents are promoted successfully through involvement in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in the core subjects by providing opportunities for pupils to work independently and apply their skills across the curriculum.

- Build on the good practice that exists to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching across the school.
- Develop the role of subject leaders and of governors to monitor the school's work better and so quicken the pace of improvement.

A small proportion of the 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average by Year 6, although they vary from year to year because of the small numbers involved. Recent underachievement in science is beginning to be addressed by ensuring that the curriculum now covers all the prescribed work. This now gives pupils a clearer understanding of topics not effectively covered in the past. The school has introduced a pupil tracking system that encourages teaching to better support learning. Pupils have sound opportunities to apply their science skills and there are rather limited opportunities for practical work which occasionally restricts pupils' progress. Opportunities for pupils to work independently and apply their skills across the curriculum in all subjects are not well developed. Standards of writing have been a concern since the previous inspection, and the school has enjoyed some success to overcome these shortcomings.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. They say that they enjoy school and generally show positive attitudes to their work. Relationships are good and pupils are confident that there is always somebody they can go to should they have any worries or concerns. They feel safe in school. Attendance is satisfactory. It has improved this year following a two-year decline and the school is taking action to raise it further. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and enjoy the extra sporting musical and other activities offered after school. The school's programme for personal and social education helps the pupils develop a good understanding and awareness of moral and social issues. Pupils' understanding of spiritual and cultural traditions including the multicultural, are less well developed.

Through discussions in class and school council, pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community and are encouraged to give their views, such as when suggesting improvements to playtimes through the introduction of 'buddies' to befriend others. They have some opportunities to link with the local community such as visiting the local church and providing charitable support for local concerns. Pupils' interest in learning and their standards in academic skills prepare them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is effective at promoting positive relationships and good behaviour in classrooms. Consequently, most pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Some teaching is lively and stimulating, with a good balance achieved between whole class discussion and individual or group work that challenges and involves all pupils. In less effective lessons, attention is not successfully given to meeting the full range of needs and abilities in the class. Occasionally, lessons are dominated by teacher talk. While lower attaining pupils and those who have learning difficulties are often well supported, some higher attaining pupils are not challenged effectively, and for these pupils the pace of learning is slowed. Newly introduced tracking information records pupils' progress but is not used consistently well to inform next steps in learning. Marking celebrates what pupils have achieved but does not always provide effective information to help them improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is beginning to improve links between subjects and is refining planning. This improvement is beginning to impact on learning. It promotes enjoyment in lessons because learning offers more practical and creative opportunities and supports pupils' personal development. French is taught regularly from Year 1 to Year 6. The curriculum to deliver improvements in mathematics, particularly problem solving, is not successfully developed across the school. A good range of sporting and musical after-school activities enhances the provision, and the school arranges regular visits and visitors to enhance learning. For example, during the inspection the Key Stage 2 classes visited the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, and gained valuable experiences to enhance their understanding of the Second World War. Overall the curriculum prepares pupils satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school has a warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils feel safe because they know that staff will listen to any concerns they may have and that adults can be approached to sort out any difficulties. Most pupils are mature and confident and like having responsibility. For example, some pupils run a healthy tuck shop. Child protection and other safety procedures are securely in place. The guidance and support of pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. Pupils can recall some of their targets, some of which are challenging and support pupils to improve progress, but their use is inconsistent. Leaders have therefore rightly identified the need to improve further pupils' awareness of individual learning targets in lessons so that pupils can be more actively involved in judging for themselves how well they are doing. However, improvement in this area is at an early stage of development, and pupils' independent learning skills are not well developed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is committed to improving standards but the impact of the initiatives to achieve this has yet to be seen as they have been only recently introduced. The school is developing strong links with a local school, and a federation agreement with the school takes place later this year. The headteacher has made a speedy and accurate assessment of the school's needs, and has introduced a number of changes. For example, a pupil tracking system effectively monitors the progress of pupils, although the impact has yet to improve standards. Rigour in the monitoring of pupils' progress is not consistent, and the role of subject leaders is underdeveloped in this aspect. Governors know the school well and are keen to see it progress. The chair of governors provides challenge and support to the headteacher. Governors have a broad view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but their monitoring role has not been successfully focused to challenge the school to raise standards.

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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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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 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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lutton St. Nicholas Primary School, PE12 9HN

Thank you for the polite and warm welcome I received when I visited your school recently. I very much enjoyed speaking with you and visiting all your classrooms. I thought you would like to know what I found out about your school.

You clearly enjoy school and gain a lot from the friendships and opportunities provided. I was impressed by your good behaviour and the respect that you show one another and to grown-ups. Well done! You are also making some good choices to help you to stay healthy and fit. Many said how much they enjoy the healthy options provided by school. I think this is helping you to mature and become confident young people.

I can see that you are acquiring sound knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science and that these are improving.

Mrs Stillwell has worked hard with the staff and made a difference since she became headteacher. The governors and staff are determined to keep improving your school. I agree with Mrs Stillwell that teaching and learning can be better across the school. Staff are also going to work more closely to support you working independently and to help you to use your skills in other areas of learning.

With best wishes to you all,

Ian Jones

Lead inspector