

The Richmond School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120494
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313638
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Brown

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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Jarvis
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Fisher
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Richmond Drive Skegness Lincolnshire PE25 3SH
Telephone number	01754 766639
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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 pupils' personal development, including how their behaviour affects their learning, and the quality of academic support. In addition, the school's work in developing the curriculum was evaluated to judge its contribution to pupils' progress and their personal development. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national assessment data, the school's own assessment and monitoring records, policies, minutes of meetings and the parents' questionnaires. In addition, the work of some teachers was observed in the visits to classes. Interviews were conducted with some teachers, senior members of staff and a number of pupils. 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 is one of several larger than average sized primary schools in the town of Skegness. Pupils come from the town and from some of the surrounding villages. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and nearly all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average and the number entitled to free school meals is very small. The school has 'Healthy Schools' status and was awarded the Inclusion Mark.

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. This confirms the views of the parents and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Responses to the parents' questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. Two comments were typical, 'I would recommend this school to anyone' and, 'I have always been very impressed with the school.' Pupils like the school. Their learning involves and engages them and they enjoy the wide range of creative activities and sports that the school provides.

Pupils' achievement is good and they attain above average standards. Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of development broadly in line with those expected for this age. From this starting point to the time they leave at Year 6, they make good progress. Since the last inspection, the school's performance in national assessments and tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 has invariably been above, or well above national averages.

The school rightly prides itself on the high quality way it cares for, develops and guides its pupils. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress ensures that, where there are any signs of underachievement, action is taken quickly to provide extra support. Additionally, teachers place a great deal of emphasis on pupils' personal development and well-being, enabling pupils to stay safe and healthy. They listen carefully to the views of pupils and, where they can, respond positively to their opinions and concerns. Regular meetings of the school council and whole-school questionnaires enable pupils' views to be gathered. These keep staff well informed. For example, when a number of pupils pointed out that they had few activities to keep them occupied at lunchtimes; extra games and equipment were provided and older pupils given specific responsibilities. As a result, the pupils report that they are much happier with the arrangements. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful to each other. Their good relationships with staff mean that they know there is someone to turn to if they are worried about anything.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school serves an area geographically isolated from some aspects of mainstream culture. To compensate for this, teachers make an extra effort to bring visitors in to the school, take the pupils to visit interesting places and involve them in many local events. As a result, the pupils make a good contribution to their community. One notable aspect of this is the school's annual enterprise project. Led by Year 6 pupils, but involving all the school, this is successful in raising pupils' awareness of economic issues in a practical but enjoyable manner.

The last inspection identified the need to improve procedures to promote good attendance. This was done and, for a time, there was an improvement. However, over the last two years the level of attendance has fallen again and is now below average. The main reason for this is parents taking their children on holiday during term time. This handicaps the learning for many of these pupils, creating gaps in their knowledge and understanding, which hinders their progress.

Teaching and learning are good. This is not a complacent school and teachers think hard about the impact of their work. When something is not working well, they are prepared to change and innovate. For example, when it became clear that the school's system to track pupils' progress was unable to provide the detailed information teachers wanted, they changed to a new, more effective, system. This identified a significant gap between pupils' competence in reading and their achievement as writers, and the teachers got additional help to tackle this issue. Subsequently, the school initiated a 'visual literacy' component into its curriculum. This

exploits digital technology, challenging and engaging the pupils in a creative and exciting way. In a Year 6 lesson for French week, pupils researched information on the internet and in books, about important characters from French history. They wrote notes, produced scripts and filmed presentations, edited and expanded these with slides and other materials. Careful monitoring and evaluation has shown that this way of working has improved pupils' writing skills.

The school's curriculum is good overall. Teachers have made great strides in using information and communication technology to motivate and engage pupils. The next stage of this work is designed to cater more specifically for the individual interests of each pupil. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with special gifts and talents, but the teachers understand that, for those pupils who are more able, work needs to be even more challenging.

The leadership and management of the school are strong and effective. There is a sense of purpose and energy in the school that helps to ensure that everybody focuses on what will produce the best outcomes for the pupils. The budget is used wisely and the school is well cared for and well resourced. There are sensible plans in place to make good use of the slightly higher than recommended carry forward budget from the previous year to improve provision. The governing body is diligent. Governors monitor and evaluate the progress of the school thoughtfully, consulting widely and seeking guidance and training when they feel it is appropriate. With the standards achieved and the careful management of the budget, the school provides good value for money.

Other than the area of attendance, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. For example, aspects of science that were previously weak have now become one of the strengths of the school. The thoughtful approach of the teachers, the drive and vision of the leadership and the good outcomes for pupils demonstrate that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good because teaching and learning are good. Children enter Reception from a wide range of pre-school settings and the quality of the liaison between the school and these providers varies considerably. Nevertheless, the children settle quickly into the school's routines, confidently fitting into the large school setting. Older pupils play an important role in this process, for example, running the lunchtime 'Huff and Puff Club' for the Reception children with adult supervision. This is enjoyable for everyone and helps the children to form good relationships. Good quality outdoor provision enhances children's personal, creative and physical development. Their achievements in all areas of learning are monitored carefully and their progress recorded to ensure that any difficulties are quickly identified and addressed. Consequently, they make good progress during their time in Reception with most reaching or exceeding the expected levels by the time they move into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum, creating programmes that cater more for the individual learning needs of pupils, including the provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Introduce and implement rigorous procedures to promote better attendance.

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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?	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	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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.

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	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

18 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of The Richmond School, Skegness, PE25 3SH

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my visit and I appreciated how many of you were keen to share your work and ideas with me. I would like to share with you what I thought about your school.

You told me that you go to a good school. Your parents told me this as well and I agree with you all. The headteacher, the teachers and all other staff, as well as the governors, are working hard to make even more improvements. They have many good ideas about how to do this.

You too play your part in making Richmond School a good school. You have your own ideas for making changes and the school listens and acts on them. Many of you have jobs that involve supporting each other and helping to look after the school. You carry these out well. There is a lot for you to do both in your lessons, on visits and in the clubs and activities you attend. I was impressed to see that the standard of your work is improving. It was clear to me that you try hard with your work, but I noticed that a few of you have quite a lot of time off school, usually because your parents take you away on holiday during term time. This hinders the learning and progress of those of you who are away a lot.

There are lots of exciting things going on in your classrooms. I was very impressed with how often and how well you use computers, cameras and other technology. I could see that they made work fun and interesting. I really liked the fact that your teachers plan to make even more use of these exciting activities. I have encouraged them to use the new materials that are now available to challenge those of you who have special gifts and talents. I have also encouraged them to continue to plan how they make some of the work you do special to each one of you. I really hope that they succeed.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.

Roger Brown

Inspector