

Gainsborough Benjamin Adlard Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120510
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	313645
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John Brennan

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steven Hatfield
Headteacher	Miss Bernadette Glabus
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Sandsfield Lane Gainsborough Lincolnshire DN21 1DB
Telephone number	01427612562
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size school, situated in Gainsborough, serves an economically and socially mixed area. Whilst the majority of pupils have White British backgrounds, a small but significant number attend from a variety of other backgrounds. This includes families from Eastern Europe and Asia, and traveller communities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A higher than usual number of pupils start or leave school times other than at the usual. Children start school with skills and abilities that are well below those typically found for their age. There has been considerable staff change since the last inspection and the school is significantly smaller than it was at that time.

The school has received the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. There have been some notable improvements of late, but improvement overall since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and achieve well. However, until recently, achievement from Year 1 onwards has been uneven, and as a result standards declined. But there is now evidence in the work of current pupils that standards are rising and that pupils' progress is improving. Although overall standards remain below those in schools nationally at both Years 2 and 6, achievement is satisfactory in relation to pupils' individual starting points. Most are on course to meet the increasingly challenging targets that the school sets for them.

Leadership, management, and the capacity for further improvement are satisfactory. Leaders have been successful in building a stable staff and securing pupils' personal and academic development, although gains have been more substantial in the area of personal development. The greater involvement of staff in leading the school forward has established common purpose. Morale is high and teamwork is good. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is broadly accurate. However, action plans to take these forward do not identify the small, measurable steps required to maintain the impetus of school improvement. Whilst much has been done to improve the leadership roles of staff, efforts to help governors to develop the skills they need to evaluate the work of the school have not had the same emphasis. Consequently, governors give good support but are yet to develop the means to be fully informed about how effectively the school operates.

Moves to establish consistency in teaching and learning have met with some success, especially in the way teachers sensitively manage pupils' response in lessons and accurately demonstrate what it is they want pupils to learn. However, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Whilst most lessons have a clear overall aim, too much of what pupils do is the same regardless of ability. This makes it difficult for some pupils, particularly some lower and middle attaining pupils, to do as well as they might. With the aid of well-trained teaching assistants, the school runs successful support programmes for pupils with particular needs. However, their everyday classroom work is, as yet, insufficiently matched to their personal targets.

Although there are strengths to be found in care, support and guidance, these aspects of the school's work are satisfactory overall. The school takes the necessary steps to safeguard its pupils. All adults act as good role models and the pastoral care and personal guidance that they provide is good. As a consequence, parents are very approving of the school because they feel their children are happy there. However, academic guidance is not sufficiently well developed to ensure that all pupils do as well as they should.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has begun to make the curriculum more creative and practical and to ensure it acts as a vehicle to help pupils hone key skills such as writing. However, this work is yet to be fully embedded. The curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education is a highly valued and successful area of the school's work and is a major reason why pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are polite and friendly, they clearly enjoy school and each other's company. However, attendance rates are low, because despite the school's best efforts, some pupils do not attend often enough. Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons. Pupils from different backgrounds and different ages get on well with each other and playtimes are social and active occasions.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Good leadership has ensured that teaching and learning are effective and that staff provide a varied and stimulating range of experiences. As a result, children make good progress towards expected goals and begin to catch up from their often very low starting points. Standards at the end of Reception are close to those typically found in their personal development, but are still below expected levels overall in other areas of learning, especially in aspects of literacy. Most staff are skilled at joining in with children's learning and asking questions that help children to think and talk. However, there are times when questioning is not probing enough to extend speaking and listening skills effectively. Staff make learning interesting by striking a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning. Ready access to a well-equipped outdoor area allows children to work seamlessly in the fresh air and in the classroom and to practice key skills in a variety of contexts. The school is proactive in working with parents, for example offering them guidance on how to play effectively with their children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure everyday learning, especially for lower and middle attaining pupils, is matched to their individual needs.
- Simplify the school's improvement plan, ensuring that it is sharply focused on short term, measurable goals.
- Enable the governing body to play a more active role in monitoring the work of the school.

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

Significant variations in how well pupils progressed saw standards fall at the end of Year 2 and 6 in recent times. Improved pupil tracking and some clarification over the expectations governing teaching and learning have arrested this decline. A push on raising standards has seen an increase, especially at Year 6, in the proportion of pupils attaining, and to a lesser extent in going beyond, expected levels. However, some pupils are still doing better than others. In general, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds reach the highest standards. For some pupils, a fragmented education combined with poor attendance adversely affects their achievement and reflects in overall standards. Where underperformance lingers, it is often to be found in lower and middle attaining pupils. This is because everyday class work is not well enough matched to their needs. Nevertheless, although below average at both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are rising steadily in English, mathematics and science and for most pupils, achievement is satisfactory given their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Much is done to help pupils to look after themselves and each other. Many know what it takes to become and stay friends and what to do if falling out occurs. The school operates as a harmonious community, because care is taken to ensure pupils learn about each other's cultures.

This is indicative of pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The vast majority of pupils show an eagerness to learn. However, a small number of pupils do not attend school often enough. Whether for improving their own learning or for the school as a whole, most pupils are good at taking responsibility. Many make a real effort to improve their work. The school council is influential and, for example, runs a fruit stall and sources its stock. Such actions not only do much to help pupils live healthily and lay the sound foundations for future economic well-being, but also put principle into action.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The gently encouraging manner of staff leads to calm and purposeful classrooms in which pupils feel able to give of their best. Planning has clarity of purpose so that demonstrations at the beginnings of lessons are accurate and clear. This is aided by the good use made of interactive whiteboards to show pupils what to do. However, because teachers often set the same task for all pupils, work in key subjects such as mathematics is often too hard for some pupils and too easy for others. In an effort to help pupils overcome limited language skills, speaking and listening has been given a high profile. There are occasions when the use of strategies such as talk partners helps pupils to explain and clarify their thinking by sharing. Pupils respond to these and other opportunities for them to work together with relish. However, there are still times when the questioning of the whole class is dominated by too much teacher talk, resulting in too few pupils, especially the less confident, answering questions. This also limits the progress that some pupils make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A sound start has been made in linking subjects together, for example in the way several subjects combined in a project on neighbourhood improvement. Such work is adding interest to the curriculum, as tasks are increasingly tailored to areas pupils like learning about and have a 'hands on' practical edge that improves learning. More opportunities are being created for pupils to practise their writing in other subjects but, as the school acknowledges, this is very much work in progress. The curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education is well thought out. This aids pupils' personal development and helps them to make the most of their time at school. A good range of extra-curricular clubs broadens pupils' interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Robust systems for safeguarding pupils underpin the school's caring ethos. Constructive partnerships with agencies such as the traveller service and welfare service promote pupils' welfare effectively. The school has a determined approach to improve attendance and strikes a satisfactory balance between rewarding regular attendance and challenging the irregular attendance. Programmes such as the 'positive play' scheme help emotionally vulnerable pupils make the most of school. Tracking systems have been strengthened, giving the school a good idea if any pupils are underperforming. This information helps match pupils to an expanding range of well-taught support programmes. However, the school is yet to ensure that pupils'

everyday learning, especially for lower and some middle attaining pupils, matches their needs and individual targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Close partnership with the local authority and some well directed training have helped develop management systems and the leadership skills of staff. By and large, management systems are robust and senior staff better informed about the school's performance than at the time of the last inspection. Pertinent areas for improvement are therefore being targeted. However, key priorities can be lost, because action plans are too numerous. Furthermore, they do not always spell out what difference the work of leaders will make to teaching and learning and thereby to pupil performance. This in turn makes it difficult for the school to assess the success of its work. Monitoring to check success, although widespread, are not always sufficiently linked to action plans. The governing body is supportive of the school and has been influential in putting the school on a sound financial footing but their role in holding the school to account is underdeveloped.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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?	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

08 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Gainsborough Benjamin Adlard Community School, Gainsborough, DN21 1DB

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

It felt like we were visiting one big happy family. This is because adults and children treat each other with respect and play and work well with each other. You work hard in lessons and play actively at break times. We were impressed with how much you know about how to be friends and about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Many of you try to do this well. You clearly enjoy school. Despite this, some children do not come to school often enough.

There are some good things happening in your classrooms. We were impressed with the calm way in which you and your teachers were able to work together. We did feel that some of the work you were given was too hard for some of you and too easy for others. We have asked the school to think more carefully about giving you work that is just right for you so that all of you do as well as you possibly can. You can play your part by continuing to work hard and to try hard with the targets of which many of you have a good knowledge.

The headteacher, staff and governing body are trying hard to make this school the best it can be. They have some good ideas about what to do next. We have asked the school to think carefully about how they might take these ideas forward. In particular, we have asked the governing body to join in with this and to see for themselves what is happening in your school.

Thank you once again, and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Brennan

Lead inspector