

The Gonerby Hill Foot CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120524
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	313651
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Miller

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Challis
Headteacher	Mr Peter Riches
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Gonerby Hill Foot Grantham Lincolnshire NG31 8HQ
Telephone number	01476 565800
Fax number	01476 569647

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. Attainment of children on entry to the Reception Year is typical for their age. Most pupils are White British. The percentage from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion for whom English is an additional language is average. There are a few at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils who have additional learning needs is well below average and the proportion with a statement of educational need is below average. The school has gained a number of awards over the years, and in 2007 received an Excellence in Sport Provision Gold Award and a Healthy School Award.

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. As a Church of England faith school, it is effective in its aim of providing for each individual pupil's body, mind and spirit. It is successful in its Christian aim of nourishing pupils' souls in order to feed their intellect. Consequently, standards are above average by Year 6, and pupils achieve well, because their lives and learning are underpinned securely by their outstanding personal development and enjoyment in learning. One parent reflected well the majority view when writing: 'If only every primary school had Gonerby Hill Foot's atmosphere! A fantastic, happy school!' Inspectors agree it has some outstanding features, including the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum, including extra-curricular and enrichment activities, is also outstanding. This is because teachers match work well to individual pupils' needs and interests. A high reputation has been gained not only for the school's involvement and successes in sport, but also for its contribution to the pupils' musical and artistic development. Such activities add significantly to their spiritual and cultural development. The school enables its pupils to become well-rounded and responsible young citizens.

Teaching and learning are good overall. There are examples of excellent practice where pupils rise to high expectations and challenge. High quality teaching and learning have been established in the Foundation Stage, and the staff and governors are rising well to the challenge of ensuring this level of provision permeates throughout the school. However, the school recognises that not all teaching has yet ensured consistently high enough expectations of pupils across the full range of subjects. Nevertheless, the close tracking of pupils' progress is successfully raising standards by identifying any potential underachievement and providing well-focussed support, particularly through the setting of short and medium-term targets in core subjects. The stage is now set for the school to take the next step by ensuring the setting of targets for pupils, across the full range of subjects, to help them make even better progress.

Pastoral care and guidance are excellent, and help secure the pupils' welfare. Safeguarding procedures are robust, and full attention is given to pupils' health and safety. The school is very successful at getting pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils are prepared well for their next stage in education. Partner secondary schools have commented on the positive attitudes, confidence and leadership skills of Gonerby Hill Foot pupils. The school takes a common-sense approach to self-evaluation, but has sometimes been cautious in its self-assessment. Targets are met and those for improvement match well the increasing challenges the school sets itself. The good quality of education is down to the good leadership of the school at all levels. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers point to the excellent leadership of the headteacher in securing the school's success.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children settle very quickly into school life. Many parents and carers refer to the warm, welcoming atmosphere and the very high quality care and guidance their children receive. Excellent working relationships enable teachers to challenge children very effectively. Consequently, children make good individual progress to meet the early learning goals, and many exceed them. If children hesitate in their responses, teachers gently encourage them to find solutions for themselves. Excellent management results in very good assessment and record keeping, ensuring teachers understand the children very well. Such information, combined with

thoughtful planning of activities, helps children make the best progress. Teaching is excellent with a very good blend of adult led and child initiated activities so that children develop in confidence, concentration and independence. Together, the teachers and children work creatively and imaginatively as a result of the exciting and stimulating curriculum. Consequently, children are eager to come into school. The happy and stimulating surroundings help them to develop their personal and social skills very well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations and improve the quality of their teaching throughout the school to match that found in the Foundation Stage.
- Use the school's improved data on pupils' performance to set them longer-term targets across the full range of national curriculum subjects to raise further the standards of all groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils are achieving well and making good progress. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils who need additional help with their learning make good progress throughout the school. Standards continue to improve because of important developments in the use of assessment data and the setting of targets for pupils. These are challenging and are enabling an increasing proportion of pupils to reach above nationally expected levels by both Years 2 and 6. Nevertheless, the school is not resting on its laurels. Additional initiatives are already planned to ensure standards and achievement improve even further.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are enthusiastic about school life. Behaviour is good and attendance is well above average. Spiritual, moral and social development are excellent. Pupils thrive in the family atmosphere, where they treat each other with great respect and ensure their mutual safety. Older pupils particularly like the fact that: 'There are lots of people in the community and our school helps us to get on with them. Everyone cares about you enough to sort out any problems.' Pupils care about the environment, raise funds for charity and contribute eagerly to community life. This promotes their self-esteem very well and leads to an early understanding of citizenship. Pupils increase their basic skills effectively and take an active part in decision making through the school council. House captains take their duties seriously. They ensure younger children have friends to play with, and help them to resolve quickly any minor squabbles. Cultural development is good, and pupils are prepared well for life in multicultural Britain. Pupils thoroughly enjoy sport and the ways they put into practice their understanding of how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles are very good indeed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Learning, and the teaching that underpins it, are good overall in Years 1 to 6. The questioning of pupils by teachers is usually particularly effective. Teachers are good at getting pupils to explain their thinking and ideas. This leads to creative and confident learning, which is

particularly appreciated by parents and as one of them wrote: 'The teaching staff have a superb rapport with the pupils, and strive hard to help children to learn.' The excellent teaching practice now established in the Foundation Stage, with improved learning skills and pupils' expectations, is starting to feed through into Years 1 and 2. The headteacher and governors are determined to ensure that this improvement in quality continues throughout the school. However, although staff are rising to the challenge, strategies are still to be applied consistently across all classes and subjects in early Key Stage 1.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum meets the pupils' varied needs exceptionally well and is being constantly developed. Further improvements are planned to enhance the provision for potentially more able pupils, and those who have particular interests and talents. The needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language are met very well. A strong emphasis is placed on the key skills of literacy and numeracy, and provision for music and sport are real strengths. There are diverse opportunities to learn musical instruments and the school has an excellent choir. Sporting activities are many and varied. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) supports pupils' excellent personal development. A wide range of trips and visits enrich their learning exceptionally well. Valuable partnerships have been established with other schools, which add significantly to the breadth and quality of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares very well for its pupils, with effective systems for safeguarding their welfare and promoting well-being. Full attention is paid to health and safety arrangements, including regular staff training. Parents agree that pastoral support is excellent because staff know their pupils very well and react particularly sensitively to any problems. The school ensures excellent support for pupils who find learning difficult, or who are at an early stage of learning English.

Academic guidance is good. Assessment information is being used increasingly well, particularly in English and mathematics, to ensure pupils understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work. Overall, improved tracking systems are used well to monitor pupils' learning and ensure they receive the support they need to make good progress. Teachers assess pupils' abilities well, and good progress has been made in the setting of relevant targets for pupils in the short or medium term. However, the linking together of the various strands of assessment information from all subjects, to provide an extended overview of pupils' progress, is still in the process of development. Staff and governors understand the importance of taking this next step.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The excellent leadership and direction provided by the headteacher is appreciated not only by the school itself but also by its partners within the local network of schools. His contribution to other educational establishments, and through the school's participation in national initiatives, is recognised as outstanding. Such leadership has benefited the school extremely well and this is recognised by parents whose comments include: 'The headteacher is superb. He commands

respect, whilst being approachable and able to share in the children's successes.' Effectively managed staff changes and promotions have resulted in a relatively new team of subject leaders and senior managers, some of whom are still inexperienced. Accountability is readily accepted by all in posts of responsibility, including governors, because they both have and take good opportunities to develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Good governance, and professional leadership and management have led to effective improvement and also provide good capacity for future improvement.

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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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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?	1
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

3 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Gonerby Hill Foot CofE Primary School, NG31 8HQ.

There is an old saying that history sometimes repeats itself. A few days ago, exactly 100 years after your school first opened on 1 July 1908, you welcomed us very warmly into your school. Ms Dawes, Mr Lafford and I would like to thank you for making us a part of your Centenary celebrations. One hundred years ago from the date I am writing this letter, your school had its first inspection visit from a member of the local education committee. Your original school logbook does not record what he found, but we can tell you that yours is a good school. It also has some excellent qualities.

These are some of the things we found are best about your school.

- You get an excellent start to your school life in the Foundation Stage.
- You behave well, and your enjoyment of school is excellent.
- Teachers, and other staff and governors take very good care of you.
- Teaching is good. Your work is planned very carefully and lessons are interesting.
- Your school works very well with others to help you make good progress.
- You are able to take part in a very good range of sporting and musical activities.
- The staff and governors are determined you get the best chances in life.
- We agree with your parents when they tell us you have an excellent headteacher.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure the excellent start you get in the Reception classes continues to help you to achieve even better as you get older and move into other year groups.
- Build on the good ways your teachers have of assessing your work and setting targets with you and extend these to all subjects.

We think that your school's original headteacher, Miss Mary Elizabeth Coxon, would have been proud of you. We know your current headteacher and his staff definitely are. They are right to be so, and you too can be proud of your achievements. Please continue to set a good example to inspire future pupils over the next 100 years.

With all best wishes for your future,

Michael Miller

Lead inspector