

The North Cotes Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120579
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313681
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jonathan Petchell
Headteacher	Mrs Anna Coney
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2003
School address	Sea Lane North Cotes Grimsby South Humberside DN36 5UZ
Telephone number	01472 388379
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small primary school serves the village of North Cotes and surrounding settlements. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, although the school as a whole is socially and ethnically very mixed. A former Royal Air Force base nearby is now the site of housing estates, which provide low cost accommodation, attracting families from towns and cities throughout England. The base also houses the New Tribes Mission (NTM), a residential college for missionaries from all over the world. Consequently, pupil mobility is exceptionally high; pupils frequently enter or leave the school at times other than the beginning of Reception or the end of Year 6. Pupils' attainment on entry is often much lower than that found in schools nationally. Almost a quarter of current pupils are from NTM, many of whom have had no pre-school experience and speak little or no English. Some pupils also have a record of interruptions to their education. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. There has also been a high turnover of staff, including the headteacher, who has been in post for two years.

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. Pupils of all abilities and from all social and ethnic backgrounds flourish in an extremely caring environment and, as a result, make good progress in their learning and develop excellent personal qualities. One parent put it like this: 'I am amazed that a small village school has so much to offer in terms of education, morals, culture and, very importantly, enjoyment.' The school has been through an unsettled period when a high turnover of staff disrupted the continuity of pupils' learning and caused standards to fall. Two years on however, thanks to the headteacher's excellent vision and leadership, the school is once again going from strength to strength.

Standards are rising. Current standards are broadly average. For most pupils, this represents good achievement over time or from their personal starting points on entry to the school. An outstanding strength of the school is the success with which staff integrate pupils from diverse social, cultural and linguistic heritages. Many pupils join the school part way through their primary education, some with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have gaps in their education. Nevertheless, the school's excellent pastoral care and academic guidance ensures that such pupils quickly become 'part of the family' and begin to make good progress.

Pupils learn effectively because teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers set challenging targets and successfully motivate pupils to achieve them. As a result, more pupils are on course to attain above average standards than in recent years. The curriculum is good. The way teachers personalise the curriculum in order to meet the individual needs of pupils, from those who find learning difficult to those who are potentially able, gifted or talented, is an important factor in driving up standards, particularly in English and mathematics, although these highly beneficial arrangements do not yet extend to planning for science.

Pupils' extremely positive attitudes, behaviour and response are also key factors in the good progress that they make. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils are unafraid to 'fail' and readily rise to the challenge to do their best. Staff promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to a high standard. Pupils receive an excellent grounding in safe and healthy lifestyles. Highly positive attitudes and values, along with secure and improving levels of basic skills prepare pupils well for their on-going education and for their lives as young adults. The school is at the heart of village life. Pupils support many village projects and so gain many valuable insights into citizenship.

Central to the school's success is the headteacher's inspirational leadership. Her enthusiasm for the school rubs off on staff and builds morale. Everybody is pulling in the same direction, because they share the headteacher's vision and because rigorous management systems are building quality and consistency in the school's work. However, staff turnover has prevented the development of subject leadership roles and, despite good support from the senior teacher, the scope of school improvement planning is somewhat restricted. Governors support the school well but they collect too little first hand information to act as truly critical friends. That said, self-evaluation is accurate and the school's record over the last two years demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education. This stems from good provision and high quality care, which ensures that children settle quickly and engage happily in their learning. The school has improved the way it evaluates children's performance and plans activities that meet their learning needs. Reception staff give particular emphasis to developing personal, social and communication skills and children's progress is good. Foundation Stage learning is based on practical, 'hands on' activities, with lots of opportunities for imagination and play, both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children's overall achievement is good. From below average starting points, most children come close to the Early Learning Goals by the time that they move to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend current good practice in personalising pupils' learning to include science.
- Develop subject leadership roles, so that all staff contribute effectively to school improvement planning.
- Give governors a more prominent role in monitoring aspects of the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average. At the end of Year 6, overall standards were significantly below average. Standards in English were average, but mathematics scores were exceptionally low and science scores were well below the national average. In both key stages, too few pupils exceeded the expected level for their age and there was evidence of underachievement on the part of girls. These results were, in part, the legacy of staff turnover that has adversely affected pupils' progress in recent years. They are also a reflection of exceptionally high levels of pupil mobility, which means that pupils' achievements do not always reflect in the results of national tests.

The school has successfully tackled issues relating to the teaching of mathematics and science and, as a result, pupils are now making better progress in these subjects. Throughout school, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Pupils' targets are challenging and the school's tracking data show that pupils' progress is accelerating. An increasing number of pupils are on course to exceed the expected standard for their age, and that girls are doing equally as well as boys. As a result, standards in both key stages are already rising and, though broadly average, are set to rise again. However, it will be some time before pupils' current good progress reflects fully in the results of national assessments. The many pupils with low attainment on entry, be it the result of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, of gaps in their education or of using English as an additional language, achieve well in relation to their personal starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because, as one said, 'everybody gets on so well together and they get a big say in what goes on'. Consequently, attendance is well above the national average. Pupils relate extremely well to staff and show exceptional care for fellow pupils. They behave impeccably in lessons and

around school. By the time that they leave, most are very mature and confident. They show this in conscientious working habits and by striving to succeed. As a result, they are well prepared for secondary education and the world of work. Pupils demonstrate their excellent understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles by participating enthusiastically in swimming and after-school sports and in special events, such as Adventure Week and Healthy Week. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils respond sensitively to music, poetry and the wonders of nature. They have good insights into human emotions and act on an understanding of what is right. Their project to support a school in Nepal deepens their understanding of moral, social and cultural issues and, along with their close association and friendship with children from the New Tribes Mission, prepares them exceptionally well for life in a multi-cultural society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have real enthusiasm, which shines through in the lively and appealing way that they teach. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' response in lessons and of their capacity to cope with challenging work. This reflects in the way that they plan pupils' work. Most tasks promote good progress across the age and ability range because teachers match them closely to pupils' prior attainments and pitch them at levels that really make pupils think. This quality of planning, along with the way teachers involve pupils in their own learning, motivates pupils and has been an important factor in improving their learning and achievement. There are, however, occasions when this matching is not quite as sharp as it could be and, when this happens, the starting points for a small minority of pupils are not high enough to bring out their very best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. There is a consistent emphasis on literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills throughout the curriculum. Planning is well advanced to strengthen links between subjects that make pupils learning relevant and reinforce basic skills. Staff personalise pupils learning effectively in order to ensure that provision for pupils in mixed age classes meets their individual needs. This approach has improved pupils' progress in English and mathematics and staff are rightly planning to extend it to their planning for science. The school has a strong focus on creative and aesthetic subjects. Work in art, music and drama results in good standards, as it is firmly based on pupils learning and applying skills. Virtually all pupils play a musical instrument and the school band is fantastic! The school enriches its basic curriculum with an excellent range of educational visits, visitors and special events. Many such events derive from the school's excellent partnerships with the community and neighbouring schools. They bring learning to life and add much to pupils' academic and personal progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils thrive in the school's very positive 'family' atmosphere. Excellent relationships and effective communication between home and school

ensure that staff keep abreast of pupils' personal needs. Pupils feel secure because staff are attentive to their needs and readily provide guidance in matters of personal development. There are thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils. They say that bullying simply does not occur. Procedures for checking pupils' progress are extremely effective. Staff set targets and ensure that pupils really understand how to improve their work. Teachers, teaching assistants and pupils themselves give sensitive support to pupils who find learning difficult and to those at an early stage of learning to speak English, which enables most of these pupils to make good progress alongside their peers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are effective. The recently appointed headteacher is an excellent leader. Her personal example, energy and enthusiasm for the school inspire all who work there. She has already won the respect of governors, staff, pupils and their parents. This stems, in part, from the school's outstanding success in integrating pupils from diverse social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds into the 'family' and enabling them to overcome barriers to learning. The headteacher's vision and the rigorous procedures that she has introduced for checking on standards and quality have also built a consistency of approach that has been central to improving the quality of teaching and, thereby, improving pupils' achievement. She receives good support from the senior teacher. However, the high turnover of staff has so far prevented the development of subject leadership roles to strengthen further planning for school improvement. Governors support the school effectively. The headteacher ensures that they are well informed but there is scope for them to collect more first-hand evidence, in order to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

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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?	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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

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	1
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

31 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Cotes CofE Primary School, Grimsby, DN36 5UZ

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when I visited your lessons. I particularly liked hearing the band play during Achievement Assembly.

This is what I found out about your school:

- children in Reception get off to a good start in school
- you all thoroughly enjoy school because your teachers plan lots of really exciting things for you to do
- you work hard and, as a result, you make good progress
- you get along extremely well together and you give a warm welcome to all who join your school, but especially to those who need help to speak English
- your teachers and other adults take extremely good care of you, keep you safe and help you to improve your work
- Mrs Coney, the governors, staff and pupils are working hard to make your school even better.

In order to help, I have suggested three things that the school should do:

- organise science in a similar way to English and maths lessons, so that you all work at a level that is exactly right for you
- give more teachers the job of leading subjects
- encourage governors to visit and to see for themselves what works well and what needs to be improved.

I believe that your school will continue to go from strength to strength and you can all help by always doing your very best.

Thanks again and best wishes to everyone at North Cotes CofE Primary School.

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector