

Welton St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120591
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	313684
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Dawn Berry
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	School Drive Welton Lincoln Lincolnshire LN2 3LA
Telephone number	01673 860339
Fax number	01673 860339

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Welton St Mary's Church of England Primary School is a larger than average school situated in the village of Welton in Lincolnshire. Pupils are almost exclusively of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average.

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 with some outstanding features, which gives its pupils a fine start to their education.

The provision of excellent care, guidance and support, together with the outstanding partnerships with parents and other outside agencies, promote in pupils extremely high quality personal development and well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a very high standard. Their behaviour, both inside and outside formal lessons, is exemplary. They grow quickly in maturity so that, by the end of Year 6, they are very effective members of the school community. They enjoy taking responsibility for both their actions and their work.

Against this positive backcloth, pupils make good progress. Children make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage. The school realises that this progress would be enhanced even further by a developed outside facility, and plans are in place to secure this. At the end of Year 2, pupils' standards of attainment are well above average; by the end of Year 6, they are significantly above average. This is because of the good teaching which they receive and the good curriculum which stimulates them. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and work effectively with their teaching assistants. They use a good range of classroom resources and learning initiatives to involve pupils in their learning and to help them to achieve well. However, there are variations in the effectiveness of the implementation of such initiatives. In a few lessons, pupils were not sufficiently active in their own independent learning and involved in the assessment of their own progress. This inconsistency is a main area of improvement for the school.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The many strengths of the school are attributable to the vision, commitment and strong teamwork of the head teacher, school leaders, staff and governors. Together, they have developed a community where learning is valued regardless of pupils' age or ability. This ensures that all pupils' needs are well met, including those who are gifted and talented and those who find learning literacy and numeracy more difficult. The budget is well managed and the school provides good value for money. The head, governors and the leadership team have high expectations for the school. They clearly know its strengths and areas of relative weakness and have developed, and in many cases have successfully implemented, good strategies to address the areas for development identified at the time of the previous inspection. Their successes so far clearly indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception Class with attainment that is close to that expected for their age. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with attainment that is above that expected. Teaching and learning are good but there are some inconsistencies between the two classes. For example, the more effective teaching incorporates child-initiated actions as well as teacher led activities. Teachers plan lessons well to cover the six areas of learning. The curriculum has improved over the last year and there is now a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by the children, so that they become good, independent learners. Children have good attitudes to learning and sustain their concentration on tasks well. Teachers and assistants use the Foundation Stage outdoor area as well as possible by careful planning. As there is no canopy

or direct access to the area from either classroom, children cannot use the area for independent activities throughout the day. The school is aware of this limitation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that it reflects the best practice in the school to ensure that pupils are more active in lessons and involved in measuring their progress.
- Develop outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage so that children can access it to enhance their independent learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In 2007, by the end of Year 2, standards were well above average and pupils achieved especially well in reading and mathematics. The school's tracking of pupils' progress, together with work seen by inspectors, confirm that the current Year 2 pupils also achieve well. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 6 were significantly above average. This represented good achievement for that cohort. Similarly, the current Year 6 are demonstrating good progress and are on target to at least maintain the standards reached in 2007. Their end-of-year predictions indicate that they will surpass the school's very high targets set for them. This reflects their good progress. Pupils who have additional learning needs make good progress in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Pupils have exceptionally good attitudes towards their work and say that they enjoy coming to school because it is friendly and welcoming. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and in other areas of the school is excellent. They demonstrate very good care and consideration for each other, particularly in the support of younger children when they are paired as 'buddies'. They have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe and enjoy healthy lifestyles. Pupils feel safe in school and say that there is someone they could turn to if they have a problem. One pupil said, 'You can trust every teacher and tell them anything.' Pupils have a variety of responsibilities around the school and school councillors have an extremely significant influence on the life of the school. For example, they have a budget and have been instrumental in a playground development project. Pupils have raised money for several charities and set up links with schools in Uganda, Greece, Germany, Malta and Czechoslovakia. Pupils work together very well. They acquire good standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT, which prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan conscientiously and provide pupils with lessons that, for the most part, are lively, stimulating and challenge their thinking. There is a good balance between whole-class teaching and individual and group work. In the best lessons there is real zeal and enthusiasm shown by teachers, and pupils comment on how much they enjoy their learning. Teachers provide a calm,

non-threatening, supportive atmosphere. Pupils respond well to this and frequently demonstrate mature attitudes to their work. Teaching assistants play a positive part in promoting good progress, especially for pupils needing extra help. They are generally deployed effectively in supporting pupils of all abilities to help them participate fully in lessons. Lesson objectives feature prominently, helping pupils to realise what is expected of them. These objectives are used appropriately when teachers give feedback on how well pupils are progressing. There is evidence of assessment strategies being utilised by pupils but these are not yet fully embedded throughout school. There is a lack of consistency in the marking of mathematics, particularly about clear indications to targets. There is occasionally an over-reliance on the use of worksheets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is well organised, well balanced and fulfils statutory requirements. Subject plans consistently provide a range of stimulating and challenging experiences for pupils. Opportunities to link subjects together in lessons are taken frequently and this helps to support learning.

There is a good and diverse range of enrichment activities. Well planned local visits include those to a veterinary surgery, the village library and church, and, further afield, Lincoln Cathedral, a folk museum, Eden Camp museum, the seaside and theatre. Regular visitors to the school have included live musical performances, an optician who organised a role-play area for Reception pupils, a dentist and members of the local church. The school provides an extensive and diverse programme of sporting activities for both genders, which includes badminton, karate, gymnastics, Irish dancing, swimming and football. Pupils realise the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. School initiatives, such as participation in multi-activity residential trips, the installation of water dispensing machines and training about the hazards of drugs and smoking, culminated in the school being awarded the nationally recognized Activemark and Healthy School status in 2007.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is a very caring community where care, guidance and support are outstanding and pupils achieve well because of this. The school has very close links with parents. Child protection procedures and health and safety systems are strongly in place. The behaviour policy is consistently used well by all staff. Pupils with additional learning needs are identified early and supported well, so that they are able to understand and attain their own targets and achieve well. Relevant activities are in place to support and extend those pupils who have particular gifts and talents. The assessment, tracking and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress are excellent. Additional work is provided for those pupils who have not progressed as fast or achieved as well as they could, and this helps them to catch up. Effective target-setting in areas of pupils' personal development, literacy or numeracy are helping them to know how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have created a very inclusive school in which the needs of all pupils are of prime importance. The headteacher has forged a strong team of leaders whose work has created an atmosphere of unified purpose in which learning and achievement are paramount. This is a key element in successfully ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunity to attain their best possible standards. Self-evaluation is accurate and integrated well into the life of the school. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring teachers' planning and pupils' work, and in tracking progress. Governance is good. Governors work closely with the leadership and management team to ensure that pupils benefit from good quality provision and achieve well. They offer good support and challenge. The leadership team, including the governors, is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas that require development. Appropriate priorities, therefore, have been identified and a full range of strategies has been implemented. These have led successfully to improvements in many aspects of the school's work. However, some of these improvements such as the use of strategies to assist pupils to evaluate their own work are not yet fully embedded in the life of the school.

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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	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	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

19 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Welton St Mary's Primary School, Welton, Lincolnshire, LN2 3LA

Thank you for making us feel so welcome to your school when we visited recently. Thank you, too, for being so friendly and polite.

In the letters we received, many of your parents wrote to tell us that Welton St Mary's Primary is a good school, and we agree. It gives you a good start in life because the adults are tireless in making sure you are safe, happy and able to learn well. You understand healthy lifestyles and are lucky to have such good lunches. We know because we shared them. You enjoy your lessons and have lots of extras after school, especially for sport.

You make good progress throughout the school and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are much higher than those of most pupils in the country. You make better progress as you get older. The school is taking action to make sure you make good progress in every year, and that is one of the things we have asked the adults to carry on with. We have particularly asked them to help you make even better progress when you first come to school by completing an outdoor classroom as soon as possible for Reception and Year 1 children. We think that this will give you a really exciting place for the youngest to play and learn.

Another thing we have asked the teachers to do is to help you to be more involved in your lessons. Some of them do this very well. Now, we have asked all of them to encourage you to be more active in lessons and in measuring your own progress. You can help them by responding to their recommendations. Your headteacher and her staff run the school well. They are keen for you to make the best progress you can.

We hope you will continue to enjoy your schooling at Welton St. Mary's.

Yours

Ron Cohen

Lead inspector