

The Old Leake Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120682
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313714
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rob Aspeslugh
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Bishop
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	Old Main Road Old Leake Boston Lincolnshire PE22 9HR
Telephone number	01205 870425
Fax number	01205 871032

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school which serves the rural village of Old Leake and surrounding areas. A small minority of pupils are entitled to claim free school meals. Almost no pupils come from ethnic minority groups and no pupils have a first language other than English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average but an average proportion has a statement of special educational need. The school has an Investor in People Award, a Silver Artsmark Award and a Bronze Eco 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. It has some important good features and some areas for further improvement. A recent period of staffing turbulence and the absence of a headteacher and strong strategic direction for the school have led to an interruption to the pace and effectiveness of school improvement. However, the assistant headteachers, supported by a committed staff team, have worked hard to ensure the school has continued to run smoothly on a day to day basis by providing satisfactory leadership. A new headteacher has very recently taken up post and has quickly identified key areas for future improvement. The large majority of parents have remained supportive of the school's work and are quite rightly appreciative of the care and support their children receive from the staff team. One said, 'the teaching team appears strong and there is a good sense of community'; another that 'all the children seem to really enjoy learning and finding out how the world around them works'.

The school provides satisfactory care and guidance for pupils and meets aspects of their pastoral needs well. Consequently, pupils' personal development is good. Most say they enjoy school. Pupils know how to keep safe. Lots of physical activity and work for the Healthy Schools Award have resulted in pupils making healthy lifestyle choices. Academic guidance is satisfactory. There are systems to check how well pupils are doing and to set them targets for learning, but these do not ensure that they do as well as they can. However, pupils do demonstrate high levels of initiative through their business enterprise activities within school. They develop into confident, financially literate individuals, who are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the good lessons teachers used their assessments effectively to plan activities that challenged pupils whatever their ability. The pupils were clear about what they had to do and about how well they had done. However, this quality of teaching is not consistent across the school so in some lessons learning slows. Opportunities are lost to promote independence and pupils do not get chance to practise what they have learned or to evaluate their success. The satisfactory curriculum promotes good personal development and offers enrichment and enjoyment. However, curriculum planning is not of a consistently good quality and its impact is not monitored well enough.

Satisfactory systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have continued to have a positive impact in some areas. For example provision is now good in the Foundation Stage and standards have been raised in mathematics and science. However, strategies are not systematic enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress in all subjects and that leaders and managers at all levels are able to play their full part in improving the pace of school improvement. Consequently, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Standards are high in mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school but in English they are below average. The improvements that have already been made, and the determination to do even better demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further and that it offers sound value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills which are below what is expected but they make good progress. Good leadership has ensured that provision has improved since the previous inspection and that expectations are high. Children settle quickly into this happy and stimulating environment, because the good support and knowledge of staff make children and their families feel valued, secure and confident. Learning programmes, based on careful assessments, are taught well by teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently, by the time children enter Year 1 they achieve the standards expected of them. A wide range of exciting activities with a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated opportunities is offered both within the nursery and in the pleasant outdoor classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and progress in English so that they are in line with mathematics and science.
- Make effective and consistent use of assessment to plan challenging tasks, make it clear what pupils are to learn and give them more opportunities to practise what they have learned.
- Establish a robust system for checking how well pupils are doing which ensures that their skills are built on consistently, and generates challenging short term targets to help pupils, staff and parents assess progress on a regular basis.
- Strengthen systems for monitoring and reviewing the school's performance so that leaders and managers at all levels can play their part in quickening the pace of school improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over recent years. In 2006 they were above average but fell to below average in 2007. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently making satisfactory progress and are on target to reach the standards expected of them when they leave Year 2. The standards pupils reach and the progress they make from Years 3 to 6 have been steadily improving over recent years. In 2007 standards were above average overall. However, pupils made better progress in mathematics and science to reach above average standards. They did not make as much progress in English where standards were below average. Pupils' progress varies between age groups but they are on target to achieve increasingly challenging targets by the end of Year 6. Pupils with a learning need and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils relish taking on a considerable number of responsibilities in a range of ways, often as a result of their own initiative and leadership. For example, some are 'eco warriors' or have set up and run the school's road safety shop, including managing its finances effectively. This supports their good personal development as learners, encourages them to make a significant contribution to the school community and

helps to prepare them well for their future lives. Behaviour in lessons is good. Occasionally, when coming in from the playground and in assembly, some pupils cannot sustain appropriate behaviour without adult support. Pupils enjoy school. They have a good understanding of healthy eating, though this is not always reflected in the contents of their lunch boxes. They know how to keep safe. The school works hard to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers promote positive relationships and appropriate behaviour in classrooms. Most pupils enjoy learning and work hard. The 'gold medal challenge' motivates them though, occasionally, more able pupils say their work does not challenge them enough. There is some good teaching, which features practical activities that engage pupils and encourage them to learn for themselves and to develop problem-solving skills. Lessons proceed at a good pace and challenge all abilities. However, these principles are not consistently applied. Planning does not always show clearly what pupils are to learn, and which they understand. In some classes, too much teacher talk and too many worksheets slow the pace of learning. Marking celebrates what they have achieved but does not always help pupils to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched by educational visits, including a residential visit focusing on outdoor adventurous activities. Themed weeks help to bring learning alive. There is a good range of extracurricular activities offered to pupils of all ages. Homework is completed regularly and contributes to pupils' progress. Personal, social and health education ensures that pupils make healthy and safe choices. Links with community groups and the church add enrichment and opportunities to contribute beyond the school community. Provision for religious education, an issue at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. Curriculum planning is inconsistent, although in the best cases it is thorough and provides opportunities for active and practical learning which challenge all abilities. Current monitoring systems are not robust enough to ensure that pupils build on their skills across subjects and age groups.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding are in place. An appropriate focus is given to promoting pupils' personal, emotional and social development. The work of the learning mentor is particularly successful in promoting pupils' confidence and their ability to deal successfully with emotional or social issues. Everyone is included successfully in school life. Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants give good support to individuals and groups with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They work successfully with outside agencies where appropriate and ensure that pupils make good progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Assessment, monitoring and target-setting systems do not ensure that all pupils are challenged to do as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The assistant headteachers and other senior leaders worked hard through the period of staffing turbulence to ensure that the school has continued to run smoothly on a day to day basis. Some have continued to bring about improvements within their specific areas of responsibility. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are satisfactory. However, they are not systematic enough or known well enough by all leaders to ensure improvements proceed at a good pace, particularly in the absence of a clear strategic vision or direction. The new headteacher has quickly and accurately identified key areas for improvement. The governing body is supportive and members are regular visitors to school. They have a satisfactory knowledge of how well the school is doing and its priorities for development.

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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	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?	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

14 November 2007

Dear Pupils

The Old Leake Primary and Nursery School, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE22 9HR

We were pleased to meet you and all the staff recently and enjoyed the time we spent with you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome, talking to us, and helping us to find out about you and your school. We especially enjoyed hearing you sing in assembly and watching you proudly and politely carry out your jobs which help to make your school such a pleasant place.

Your school is satisfactory. Those who lead the school, the teachers and all the other adults do their best to look after and care for you. Your good behaviour in class helps you to learn. It is clear that you are happy at school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe there.

The school is keen to find ways to help you do as well as you can. So we have asked those who lead the school to make sure:

- you do as well in English as you do in mathematics and science
- you are clear about what you have got to learn and how you will know if you have achieved it
- you always have work to do which challenges and interests you
- you have targets that you know really well in writing, reading and mathematics
- leaders keep a very careful check on the work of the school and on how well you are all doing
- you get lots of opportunities to practice what you have learned

We are sure that Mrs Bishop and all the other adults will continue to do all they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to work hard, behaving well and by coming to school every day.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector