

# Ruskington Chestnut Street CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120693
<b>Local Authority</b>	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	313717
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kenneth Thomas

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	365
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tony Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Breckon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Chestnut Street Ruskington Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9DL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01526 832424
<b>Fax number</b>	01526 834574

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Ruskington Chestnut Street CofE Primary is larger in size than most other primary schools. A substantial proportion of pupils are from air force and army families. As a result the school takes in more pupils than usual who have had some or most of their primary education elsewhere; 47% of pupils leaving Year 6 in 2007 had not started at the school at age five. Attainment on entry varies but, taken overall, is broadly average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost all pupils have English as their first language. There are no pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. The school holds Artsmark and Healthy Schools awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school judges its effectiveness to be good and inspectors agree. It gives good value for money and has good capacity for further improvement. In this school, every child matters and the school's ethos is characterised by a strong commitment to providing an education that meets the needs of each individual pupil. Pupils are educated in an environment based upon clear values and principles that are very noticeable throughout the school and influence all aspects of school life. Relationships are excellent, pupils feel safe and secure because of the good quality support and guidance the school provides. Parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school. One captured the views of many by writing, 'A happy atmosphere and a buzz for learning.' Pupils understand the value of healthy lifestyles and make excellent contributions to the community. Their personal development is outstanding and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Children enter the school with levels of social and academic skills that are consistent with those expected for their age. From this starting point, pupils make good progress through Reception, Years 1 and 2. Although progress slows in Years 3 and 4, it accelerates in Years 5 and 6 so that achievement overall is good. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. The achievement of girls has been above that of boys, particularly in writing. This is partly because expectations of the quality of boys' written work have been too low. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/ or disabilities benefit from good quality support and make good progress towards their specific learning targets.

The effective leadership of the headteacher, with good support from other senior staff, is having a significant impact on standards and achievement. Since her appointment, the headteacher has done much to make systems for checking the school's performance more rigorous. The targets set for 2007 and subsequent years were raised to make them more challenging. The targets set for 2007 were achieved because better use was made of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress towards them. This is continuing and pupils are now making better progress than in previous years. Much good and, at times, outstanding teaching is also having a positive impact on pupils' progress. In this school, pupils want to learn and, in many lessons, they make rapid progress because teaching captures their interest and imagination. However, in some lessons progress is slower because introductory activities are too long and pupils spend too much time passively listening to the teacher. While teachers mark pupils' work regularly, in many instances marking does not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work and achieve the next steps in learning.

The curriculum promotes achievement well. It is carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils and is enhanced by an excellent range of enrichment activities. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' good progress. The school works exceptionally well with other schools, agencies and with the community to enrich pupils' education and ensure their well-being.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children start in the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills at the expected levels. Good teaching and a well-constructed curriculum that considers individual needs very effectively, help children achieve well. Children settle and adjust to school life very quickly, enjoy learning and have fun. They experience a good balance of adult-guided activities and those chosen by

the children themselves and this helps them gain confidence and independence. They work and play safely together within a well-ordered and attractive environment. Children particularly enjoy the imagination room and the outdoor area where they have the freedom to explore and discover for themselves, but can turn to adults if they need help. Good leadership ensures teamwork between teachers, and support staff is very effective. All adults demonstrate good levels of care, which results in children feeling secure and happy. Many pupils achieve above average standards at the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the achievement of boys by raising expectations and ensuring that they are continually challenged to produce good quality written work.
- Ensure greater consistency in teaching and learning to accelerate progress and raise standards further.
- Ensure the guidance that pupils receive through marking on their next steps in learning is consistent across all year groups.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress in Reception and achieve expected standards in all areas of learning. The 2007 Year 2 teacher assessments show that standards are above the national average. The overall trend at the end of Year 2 is generally upwards in mathematics and stable in reading and writing. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average and have been on a gradually rising trend since 2003. In 2007, virtually all pupils reached a Level 4 in English, mathematics and science with about a half reaching the higher Level 5. These results represent good achievement overall, although the achievement of girls is above that of boys, particularly in writing. Pupils who join the school part way through and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities succeed well as a result of careful assessment on entry and effective support given by teachers and learning assistants. The school's targets were raised to be more challenging in 2007. These targets were achieved and suitably challenging targets have been set for future years.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' very good attendance, high level of confidence and great enthusiasm for school reflect their exceptional personal development. 'School is great because we learn so much,' is a typical comment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they are extremely polite and respectful of others. They say that there is no bullying and if any issues do arise, staff deal with them effectively. Pupils know how to stay safe and who to go to if they have any concerns. They work well with others and willingly undertake responsibilities as members of the school, sports or arts councils, or serving as tuck shop monitors. Pupils help others through various charity events and gain an excellent understanding of their role within the wider community. Pupils are aware of the need to be fit and healthy. The sports clubs on offer are very popular and lunchtimes are a positive social occasion, with many taking up the excellent healthy school meals. Visits to places of worship help pupils understand and respect the beliefs and cultures of other communities. They have a less secure understanding of the contribution made by the diverse communities present in

Britain today. Pupils' outstanding personal skills and their above average academic skills mean readiness for the future is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Typically, lessons have good pace and learning activities are carefully planned to stimulate interest, and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Because classroom management is very effective, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are features of almost all lessons. In many lessons pupils have the opportunity to talk to a partner about their work. This has a positive impact on learning because pupils are encouraged to think through and improve their ideas before working independently. The pace of lessons is brisk and, with effective support from teaching assistants, progress accelerates. However, this good practice is not consistent. In some lessons, pupils spend too much time listening to their teachers and are not given enough opportunities to think and learn independently, or to work out answers for themselves before teachers provide an explanation. While there are examples of effective marking, in many instances marking does not convey high enough expectations of the work of boys.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A good and improving curriculum meets the needs of learners increasingly well. Although the seeds of a more creative approach to curriculum planning were sown a few years ago, it is only recently that stronger links between subjects, especially through information and communication technology (ICT) and expressive arts, are gaining momentum. Themed weeks such as Arty Maths and Lincolnshire Day have raised interest levels among pupils and the local community. An emphasis on learning through sound and vision by the phased introduction of interactive whiteboards is having a positive effect on motivation among older pupils, especially boys. Because these changes are relatively new, the full impact has yet to be seen in pupils' achievement. There is outstanding curriculum enrichment through the wide variety of additional sporting, musical and other extra-curricular activities as well as an extensive range of curriculum visits, visitors in school and residential visits.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care arrangements are very good. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety, welfare and protection are all securely in place, as are the required safeguarding procedures. Pupils know who to go to if they are worried or upset. Pupils new to the school are supported extremely sensitively as are those who have specific needs or are particularly vulnerable. Every support is given to help them achieve as well as their classmates and those who are gifted and talented are very well supported. Arrangements to prepare pupils for secondary school are very good. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development are much improved. Assessment information is now being used more effectively to set individual pupils' targets and identify early any who are falling behind. This is contributing to the good progress pupils are making, although the guidance given by teachers to let pupils know what they have to do to achieve their next steps

in learning is not consistently effective. The school works very closely with parents, carers and a range of external agencies to maximise pupils' learning at school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher, together with the assistant headteachers and other members of the school leadership teams, ensure that this is a very cohesive and friendly community. A strong team spirit lies at the core of all that the school does together with a clear commitment to continued improvement. This drive is being supported by the closer monitoring of teaching and learning and the more effective use of performance information across the school to identify areas where improvement is needed. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate and there is a greater awareness of the link between the school's provision and pupils' achievement. As a result, teachers are more accountable for pupils' performance. This has led to more rapid progress over the last 18 months and demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement. All staff benefit from continuing professional development that is well planned to tackle any weaknesses. Governors are very supportive and provide the school with a considerable amount of expertise. They are challenging and fully understand their roles as critical friends. Resources are managed well and financial management is good. The school works exceptionally well in partnership with parents and outside bodies, for example, in developing its extended provision and in enriching its arts and sport curriculum.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2
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	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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

11 November 2007

Dear Children,

Ruskington Chestnut Street CofE Primary school, Sleaford, NG34 9DL

Following our visit to inspect your school I am now writing to tell you what we found out. Before I do, I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and making our visit one that we will remember for a long time. We have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite, and, through our discussions with you, it was good to hear how much you enjoy school, the many after-school clubs, and other activities that are available for you. We particularly enjoyed your singing in assembly and seeing the way you celebrated pupils' achievements.

Our main finding is that this is a good school and one that is helping you to do well. You told us how in most of your lessons, teachers and other staff make learning challenging but fun and this helps you to make good progress. We have asked your headteacher and her staff to try to make all lessons like this. One of the ways in which teachers help you is by spending a lot of time marking your work. We have asked them when they mark, to give you more guidance on the things that you need to do to make your work better. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that the written work of boys is the best they can possibly do.

Your headteacher, governors and all of the adults who work with you want your school to become even better. You are key players in the school's success and, having met you, we know you will all want to continue to play your part in helping the school to be even better. Through your excellent behaviour, hard work and the care you show each other, together with willingness to take on responsibility, you all help to make this such a happy and successful community.

With best wishes for your future.

Dr Kenneth C Thomas Lead Inspector