

John Blow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122631
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314351
Inspection date	14 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs B Carver
Headteacher	Mrs H Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Snowdon Road Collingham Nottinghamshire NG23 7PT
Telephone number	01636 892 485
Fax number	01636 892 650

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' standards and achievement by the end of Year 6; the impact of leadership and management on standards and in particular the monitoring and evaluation of standards; the improvement since the last inspection. Evidence was gathered from the school's data, pupils' work, observations of teaching and school life, scrutiny of parental questionnaires and discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

John Blow Primary is a smaller than average school in the village of Collingham on the Nottinghamshire border with Lincolnshire. The majority of pupils come from Collingham although some, because their parents prefer the school, come from as far away as Newark and Lincoln. The village is made up of private and council housing and a socially and economically mixed population. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. When pupils start school, they attain at the level broadly expected for their age although in some years attainment can be higher or lower. Occasionally, year groups are affected by a high number of pupils arriving or leaving the school other than at the usual time. Nearly all pupils are White British although there is a small number for whom English is not their first language.

The school gained Activemark award and the Healthy Schools Gold accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

John Blow Primary is a good school. Staff have a clear vision with pupils' well-being and achievement at its heart and they promote this successfully. As a result, some aspects of the school are outstanding. The school has an excellent curriculum. The exceptional quality of the care, guidance and support for all pupils means their personal development is first class. Taking these together with the good progress they make, it is clear that pupils are extremely well-prepared for secondary school and the future.

Many parents hold the school in high regard and their comments often capture its key qualities: 'A superb village school with dedicated and friendly teachers', or, 'A fantastic school; my two children love going to school every day.' The partnership with parents is very important to the school and its success is evident by the good number of parents who volunteer their help in the classroom and with school activities.

The headteacher has established high expectations and gives the school a clear direction. As a result, the whole staff are one team focused closely on improving their performance so that all pupils can achieve high standards. The school knows its priorities well, which is the result of good leadership and management at every level. Monitoring the school's work is comprehensive and leads to a good evaluation of strengths and weaknesses from which the school plans improvements effectively. Improvement since the last inspection has been good as is the capacity for continued improvement.

The collection of assessment information on pupils' performance is considerable and its analysis is central to the school's self-evaluation. An improvement to what were already sound systems for tracking pupils' performance is being implemented. This is highlighting the progress made by different groups of pupils even more precisely and so strengthening the support they receive. Similarly, it is helping the school to iron out bumps that appear occasionally in standards, currently less strong in writing and some aspects of mathematics. While this is all underway successfully, it is too early to see the long term impact on achievement and standards. Governors contribute substantially to the strengths of leadership and management. Through their expertise, commitment and close involvement with the school they have developed their own well-informed views of the quality of the school's provision. Their work ensures school leaders give a good account of their work and are constantly challenged to keep the school effective.

Achievement throughout the school is good as a result of consistently good teaching and learning. Teachers and their classroom assistants have a strong grasp of the subjects they teach. Their detailed planning of lessons helps them to work effectively together. Classroom assistants and volunteers are well-briefed on the work they carry out and are particularly effective in giving support to pupils. The assessment of learning is good and it plays a key part in planning pupils' work and in helping focus support where it is needed. Learning is structured well using clear objectives which are shared to good effect with pupils. Work is carefully matched to their capabilities and pupils are well motivated and challenged by lesson tasks. Excellent planning ensures the curriculum, especially in literacy and numeracy, is outstanding, and pupils' work and activities are complemented considerably by a broad range of sports, clubs and other after-school activities. Other strengths, such as in music and art, add significantly to the high quality of pupils' engagement and enjoyment.

By the end of Reception year, children have made good progress and the large majority achieve all the early learning goals, while a small minority exceed them. Good progress continues

throughout Key Stage 1 and while standards are usually broadly average they are sometimes above average by the end of the key stage. The school sets challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 2, which encourage all pupils to make good rates of progress. The current Year 6 are on track to achieve well and to reach their targets in English and mathematics. In previous years, standards have been often well above average in English, mathematics and science, by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils made exceptional progress in English in 2006 and 2007, achieving high standards and their results exceeded the target set for English in 2007.

The school has made considerable progress on improving attendance, which is now good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and value enormously all the benefits it provides. Behaviour is excellent and the relationships between pupils and with staff are outstanding. Pupils contribute in many ways in school to make it interesting and worthwhile. The school council is particularly active in taking a strong lead in planning the achievement of 'Eco School' status. With the school's encouragement, the school council has developed a very meaningful role in school improvement. Pupils are equally active in raising funds to support many good causes across the world. A healthy lifestyle and staying safe both figure very prominently in pupils' awareness of what is good for them. Much of this is reflected in the school's achievement of the gold standard in the Healthy Schools Award. The high quality of pupils' response to school is, to a large extent, the product of the exceptional support they receive. The promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety is dealt with robustly. Pupils' self-esteem, confidence and independence are promoted very effectively. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent as a result. The school is continually introducing initiatives to improve pupils' personal development such as 'Think Children', 'Transporters' and 'Fun Fit'. Similarly, academic progress is supported well through many additional activities in reading and writing as well as through individual targets, pupils' self-assessing and good quality marking by teachers. A particularly important feature in the school's work is its strong determination to see that all pupils are valued and treated equally. In this respect, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning to speak English are given close attention and are supported throughout the school very effectively.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and this ensures all provision, particularly the quality of teaching and learning, is effective. The curriculum is broad and planned well. Assessment is well-organised and thorough and used effectively in tracking children's progress and to plan for each child. Children's activities maintain a close focus on promoting communication, literacy and numeracy skills as well as personal, social and emotional development. The effective teaching of letter sounds and linking sounds and letters supports the development of children's literacy skills. Children remain attentive and well-engaged in class. They behave well and form constructive relationships with each other, playing together and being helpful. As a result, children make good progress in all the areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the newly introduced refinements in assessment procedures are used effectively to promote pupils' achievement and ensure consistently high standards.

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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?	2
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	1

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?	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	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

15 January 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of John Blow Primary School, Collingham, Nottinghamshire NG23 7PT

I really appreciated the warm welcome you all gave me when I visited your school for its inspection. I would like to offer a special thanks to the members of the school council for so willingly and openly sharing their views of the school.

I think you have a good school and I am sure this fully agrees with your views as well. You are all making good progress and the standards you are achieving by the end of Year 6 are often above average and in some instances very impressive. You all show real willingness to work hard. Your teachers and all of the staff work as hard and I admired their determination that you all should succeed. Your school is doing exceptionally well in giving you a wide choice of activities you can enjoy. I was very impressed by the quality of your artwork and the very good opportunities you have to sing and learn musical instruments.

I think the staff know very well how to bring out the best in you and, as a result, you are developing exceptionally well as young people. Your behaviour is excellent; you look after your health and stay safe exceptionally well. What is more, you are generous towards each other and people who are less fortunate. In all, you are extremely well prepared for secondary school and the future.

Your headteacher is to be congratulated for ensuring that you are getting a good education. She has a clear idea of what needs improving. What is particularly good is that she takes your views and those of your parents very seriously. I agree with her that more could be done with the systems in place to help you raise your standards even higher.

Many thanks for all your help and I wish you well for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector