

Mount CofE Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122747
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	314383
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	181
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeremy Reichelt
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Bunnell
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kings Road Newark Nottinghamshire NG24 1EW

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Inspection number	314383

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average and serves an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is approximately twice the national average. Attainment on entry is very low. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is almost twice the national average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is above average. Currently, approximately one third of pupils are travellers. The school has received national recognition for a project on raising achievement of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Attendance is well below average. The school makes provision for Nursery and Reception aged children (Early Years Foundation Stage or EYFS). There is a 'before and after school club' which operates within the grounds of the school. This is not managed by the school's governing body.

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 where pupils from a variety of cultures and backgrounds work and play happily together. Strong emphasis on building pupils' personal and social development contributes significantly towards raising pupils' self-esteem and results in positive relationships throughout the school. Good teaching, an effective curriculum, strong pastoral support and leadership committed to equality of opportunity for all, are the key features of the school's successes. Parents speak highly of the school. Many say that they like the diverse nature of the school community and praise the way that everyone in the school shows care, respect and consideration for others. Although standards at the end of Year 6 have risen in recent years, the persistent low attendance rate has had a negative impact on the overall test results. The majority of pupils attend well, enjoy their learning and make good and sometimes outstanding progress. However, despite the extensive efforts of the school and local authority over many years, too many pupils do not attend regularly and, consequently, they do not achieve as well as others.

From the satisfactory start in the EYFS, pupils' progress begins to accelerate, especially in reading and mathematics. Although standards in all subjects are still below average at the end of Year 2, by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are average in mathematics and science. Because of the very low skills in literacy on entry into the school, although progress is good, standards in English remain below average.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show a high degree of respect for people and property. In most lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and are eager to please. Pupils know how to keep safe and lead healthy life-styles because of the emphasis placed on these aspects in the curriculum. Pupils regularly contribute to local community activities and enthusiastically support local and national charities. These positive attitudes, their tolerance and understanding of a diversity of cultures, and their good achievement, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Teachers know the pupils well and engage them in a curriculum which stimulates their imagination through a variety of rich experiences. In most lessons, good quality relationships, effective class management and an abundance of praise for pupils' efforts ensure that behaviour is good and pupils are motivated to learn. In some lessons, especially those where pupils learn their letters and sounds, the steps for learning are small, clearly understood by the teachers and pupils, and activities are carefully matched to the learning outcomes. Where this occurs, learning is good and sometimes outstanding. However, this does not apply to all lessons, especially writing, and consequently, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Adults treat pupils with respect and consideration. Consequently, pupils feel safe, secure and valued. If a problem occurs, pupils know that they can discuss matters with the teachers and feel confident that they will get help and support. Although the school has implemented a system for improving achievement through pupils' targets, they are not integrated into day-to-day learning and are not sufficiently matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Consequently, they have limited impact on pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has successfully united the staff with common purpose and ambition. Teamwork is a strength of the school. Everyone is fully committed to raising academic achievement and developing the personal and social skills of pupils from all sections of the diverse local community. Senior

leaders and curriculum co-ordinators are committed and enthusiastic, but are still developing their skills of monitoring, evaluating and improving the work of the school. Recent improvements in pupils' test results show that the school has a good capacity to improve. Governors know the school well and, especially through their links with the travellers' community, provide the school with essential information to improve upon the provision it offers to all local groups.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress. Because of their very low starting points, attainment on entry to Year 1 remains below expectation in all areas, especially boys' writing. Children enjoy coming to school and quickly settle into routines. Induction procedures into the Nursery are good and adults quickly gain a good knowledge of each child's background and needs. The caring ethos helps children gain confidence and supports their personal development well. Teaching is satisfactory and the curriculum adequately covers all six areas of learning. Children are assessed regularly and most activities are tailored to meet the full range of children's needs. Good emphasis is placed upon learning through first hand experiences, especially with the youngest children. However, sometimes there are too many children working on an activity and play becomes too boisterous for good learning to take place. The youngest children experience a good balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. However, as the children grow older, the experiences that allow them to develop their independence become fewer. Although the outside area is sometimes used well to stimulate learning, opportunities are not always taken. The EYFS is led and managed satisfactorily but monitoring is not yet robust enough to provide the leader with a clear picture of the improvements to be made.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement throughout the school, especially in writing, by ensuring that the small learning steps are planned carefully, communicated successfully to the pupils and work is sharply focused on the learning outcomes.
- Raise the level of pupils' attendance.
- Develop the monitoring, evaluating and school improvement skills of all senior managers and curriculum leaders.
- Ensure that pupils' targets are integrated into day-to-day learning and are carefully matched to pupils' levels of attainment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From their very low starting points on entry into the school, the majority of pupils, including those who find learning difficult, those from traveller families and those who are learning English as an additional language, achieve well. Over recent years, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been rising and are average in mathematics and science. Despite initiatives to improve pupils' writing, standards in English remain below average. Although the 2008 end of Key Stage 2 tests results have not yet been validated, they show a continued rise in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in all subjects, including writing. Although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been below average in recent years, the 2008 teacher assessments show that standards have risen, especially in reading and mathematics. Pupils are now making good and sometimes outstanding progress. Many of the pupils throughout the school are absent for extended periods of time and then return. Where this occurs, pupils achieve significantly less

well than others. When they do attend, due to the additional support provided by the school, progress in lessons is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well, both in classrooms and around the school, which helps them to make good progress in their learning. Pupils feel valued as individuals and show considerable respect for pupils of different cultures and backgrounds in the school. The school council has had a significant influence on improvements to the school. Members have helped to design the tyre park in the playground and carried out a safety audit of the school. Pupils are fully involved in the school and the local community. For example, they choose the member of their class to receive a special reward during the weekly 'Celebration Assembly' and visit local churches. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about working with pupils in other classes on activities such as cooking, gardening or a fitness programme. They develop financial and enterprise skills as well as good team building in other activities, such as simulating a cafe, creating a newspaper and painting a large mural for the playground. Although pupils say that they enjoy coming to school, attendance remains consistently below average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, the good relationships between teachers and pupils and effective management of behaviour are reflected in pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils say that they like their teachers and enjoy the work they are given. Lessons are orderly, productive and calm, and the climate for learning is positive. In lessons where pupils learn well, the small steps which ensure effective learning are clear, understood by pupils and matched very well to their abilities. However, this does not occur in all lessons, especially writing. When used well, teaching assistants play a valuable and skilled role in supporting pupils, especially those who are falling behind with their learning and those who are learning English as an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on raising pupils' attainment and progress in literacy, numeracy and science. Currently, the school's focus on using information and communication technology (ICT), film and visits outside school to improve pupils' enthusiasm and achievement in writing is beginning to be effective. The school has recently developed a thematic and practical activity based curriculum that takes account of the different ways that pupils learn. However, it is not yet sufficiently embedded and it is too early for the school to judge its impact on raising standards and achievement. Nurture groups help some pupils develop social skills so that they can access the whole curriculum more successfully. There is an excellent and varied range of visits, visitors and family learning opportunities to enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All adults are fully committed to the academic achievement, welfare and personal development of all pupils. One parent wrote, 'The school offers fantastic experiences and is totally inclusive.' Effective use is made of external agencies to promote local community cohesion and assist with the education and welfare of all pupils, especially those most vulnerable. Procedures for health and safety, and the safeguarding of pupils are robust. The 'buddy' system is effective in ensuring that all pupils feel safe and confident. Working with the local authority services and representatives from the local communities over many years, the school has implemented a comprehensive and imaginative range of strategies to improve pupils' attendance. However, despite these efforts, attendance remains below average and has a significant negative impact on the progress and attainment of some pupils. Pupils' work is usually marked well but there are some inconsistencies across the school. Regular assessment provides teachers with good information on pupils' attainment and progress. However, this information is not used carefully enough to match pupils' targets to their needs or ensure that the targets are integrated into pupils' daily learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's passionate commitment to improving the life-chances of all the pupils is clearly shown in her enthusiasm, commitment and dedication. She is respected and trusted by parents from all the different groups in the community. The subject co-ordinators and the recently formed senior management team are becoming increasingly involved in school evaluation and improvement. School self-evaluation is good. All leaders know what the school needs to do to improve and several new initiatives have been instigated. However, not all leaders have the skills of monitoring and evaluation of the school's work and are not having as much impact on raising standards and achievement as they could. All leaders are fully committed to promoting equality and encouraging pupils to value diversity. Consequently, the school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding. Governors support the school well, provide very effective links with groups from the local community and have a good overview of the school. The school provides good value for money.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Mount CofE Primary School, Newark, NG24 1EW

Thank you for making our recent visit to your school such a pleasant experience. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your books and talking to you. We were pleased to find that you enjoy coming to school and work hard while you are there. We were very impressed with your behaviour and the way that you all play and work happily together. The teachers are kind and helpful, and want you all to do your best.

We have judged the school to be good. You make good progress, but many of you could do even better, especially with your writing. We have asked that your lessons challenge you a little more by ensuring that you understand clearly the next small steps in your learning and giving you work which helps you learn well. We saw that you already have targets, but the teachers must make sure that they are more carefully matched to your abilities and become an even greater part of your lessons.

All the adults work hard for you, and some teachers have taken on extra responsibilities. We have asked some of them to become even better at making sure that the school continues to improve and that you all make even better progress.

We were a little concerned that some of you do not come to school as often as you should and miss out on all the exciting activities that the school has to offer. You can help the school by continuing to work hard, especially with your writing, and coming to school as often as you possibly can.

We shall take away many good memories of your school and have very much enjoyed the time we have spent with you. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers

Her Majesty's Inspector