

North Leverton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122765
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	314392
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J E Tarr
Headteacher	Mr K Bacon
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Main Street North Leverton Retford DN22 0AD
Telephone number	01427 880470
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves pupils most of whom are of White British backgrounds. Attainment on entry into the Reception class is below the national expectations, although a small number of children enter the school with skills above those normally expected for children of this age. The proportion of pupils who have additional learning needs is below average and, currently, there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has been awarded the Healthy School Standard and Active Mark in recognition of its achievements in these areas. The school is in temporary accommodation following the floods of June 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Following a decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 2, from average in 2005 to below average in 2007, the school implemented several new initiatives for improvement. Pupils' progress is now beginning to rise and standards are currently broadly average. The school gives high priority to pupils' personal, social and emotional development, and provides good pastoral care and support. Consequently, pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as seen in pupils' positive attitudes to their learning and in the good relationships that prevail throughout the school. Parents say their children enjoy school and this is reflected in pupils' good attendance.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Nearly all pupils understand clear moral and social codes, and are kind, tolerant and forgiving. The vast majority of pupils behave well. Pupils readily take on a range of responsibilities, helping teachers in the classrooms and supporting younger pupils when they can. Older pupils enjoy helping the younger pupils learn to read and comforting them if they are unhappy. The school council is proud of its part in the design and building of the 'chill-out zone' on the school play area. Pupils talk enthusiastically about raising money to help partially sighted children in Africa, and actively support many local community events. These positive attitudes, together with their achievement in lessons, give pupils a satisfactory grounding for their future learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory, enhanced well by a wide range of clubs and enrichment activities. Sport is a strong feature of the school and a large number of boys and girls take part in the many activities on offer. The curriculum enables pupils to gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through correct eating habits and exercise. Although pupils say that they enjoy lesson activities, the progression of skills and knowledge for all subjects is not sufficiently developed. Consequently, work is not always matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities.

Teaching is satisfactory. Good relationships in lessons help to motivate pupils to do their best. However, assessment data is often not used well enough to match the work to pupils' differing abilities, and the next steps in learning are not defined carefully in curricular plans or made explicit during lessons. Consequently, pupils are not always clear what they are required to learn and there is lack of challenge, especially for the more able. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Although teachers mark pupils' books regularly they do not consistently provide helpful comments on how to improve. Pupils' targets are displayed in all classrooms, but few pupils know how the targets relate to their own learning or use them to improve their level of attainment. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and, when deployed well, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is aware that priority must be given to the improvement of standards and achievement and has a good understanding of the areas for development. All other leaders are committed to supporting the headteacher and have plans for improving their specified areas. The monitoring and evaluation skills of all leaders are developing but information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning is not used well enough to accelerate improvement. Governors are committed to the school and are beginning to hold it to account more effectively for the achievement of pupils. Improvements from the last inspection and value for money are both satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Close links with the pre-school playgroup help children to adapt quickly to daily routines and teachers to have a good knowledge of all the children before they start. Because relationships between children and staff are especially warm and supportive, children's attitudes and behaviour are usually good. Effective links with external agencies help the staff to ensure that children and their families are supported should problems occur. Regular assessments of children's progress allow teachers to match activities well to children's needs. Children enjoy their work and make good progress. By the time they move into Year 1, most children meet the expected goals and a few exceed them. All staff work well together and jointly plan activities which cover all the required areas of the curriculum. A good balance between teacher-led activities focuses on developing specific skills in literacy and numeracy and child-led activities. Since the floods, lack of access to the school hall has restricted indoor physical activities and children's physical development is limited for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all leaders use the systems for monitoring, evaluation and improvement more rigorously to raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Provide sufficient challenge for all pupils by ensuring that work is carefully matched to their differing levels of ability and that pupils clearly understand the next steps in their learning.
- Provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve through making more effective use of marking and target-setting.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were below average in 2007 and too few pupils achieved the higher levels, especially in English and science. Although pupils made good progress in reading, only one in three pupils made the expected progress in writing.

At the end of Key Stage 1, standards rose from below average in 2004 to above average in 2006 and 2007. However, in 2007 very few pupils reached the highest level in reading and no pupils attained this level in writing and mathematics.

Currently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average in most year groups and achievement is satisfactory. Because the school has placed emphasis on raising standards in writing and mathematics, standards in science remain low. Pupils who find learning difficult make satisfactory progress and some achieve well. However, the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently well in lessons and many make insufficient progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Relationships throughout the school are good, increasing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils mostly get on well together and are polite and respectful. They say that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and valued. Pupils show a good understanding of healthy and

safe lifestyles. Pupils enjoy their roles as monitors and helping with a variety of tasks around the school. Their written applications for these roles, followed by interviews with staff, help to prepare them for their future employment. Pupils play an active part in the school community, often through the strong links with the local churches. The school has not placed great emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of living in a diverse multicultural society. Consequently, pupils' development in this area is just satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good relationships between teachers and pupils are evident in lessons throughout the school. Pupils mostly behave well and come to lessons wanting to learn because they feel fairly and kindly treated by their teachers. When given the opportunity, pupils cooperate well together and have the skills to discuss their work sensibly and with interest. All pupils, especially those who find learning difficult, are often well supported in lessons by highly skilled teaching assistants. However, these support assistants are sometimes not used well enough and pupils do not learn as well as they could. In many lessons, teachers are not clear enough about what they want the pupils to learn and do not define clearly enough the next small steps in learning which will allow pupils of all abilities to progress well. Consequently, too often work does not provide sufficient challenge, especially for the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum places strong emphasis on promoting pupils' moral and social skills. Links with schools in other countries help broaden pupils' understanding of lives in other parts of the world. The school has a strong sporting tradition and is proud that a large number of its pupils take part in competitive sport and reach a good level of skill. Suitable emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy sessions and many recent initiatives have been successfully introduced to raise achievement. However, little attention has been given to developing science. Opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy through other subjects are missed, to a large extent because the many worksheets used do not place enough emphasis on pupils' need to develop these skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff know pupils well and the friendly atmosphere helps pupils feel confident that they can talk to teachers about any problems that may arise. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are secure. The school liaises well with outside agencies, especially for pupils who find learning difficult. The system for tracking pupils' academic progress is used well to identify pupils who need additional support with their learning. Recent initiatives have increased teachers' understanding of the need to link targets to pupils' next steps in learning. However, this is not yet sufficiently developed and its impact on raising standards is limited. Pupils' work is usually marked regularly and sometimes used to guide pupils and help them improve. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and the school has correctly identified this as an area for further improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Following the low Key Stage 2 test results in 2006 and 2007, the headteacher rightly refocused the school on raising standards and achievement. However, plans for improvement were immediately hindered by difficult staffing issues and the aftermath of floods in June 2007. Many parents have expressed praise for the way in which the school coped during this time, but also concern that pupils are still in temporary accommodation with work on the school not yet started.

With support from the local authority, the headteacher is now successfully establishing a variety of improved systems for monitoring, evaluation and improvement. All leaders are becoming more proactive in monitoring pupils' progress and in looking more critically at factors which lead to underachievement. However, the skills of all leaders are still developing and the school's systems are not used rigorously enough. Information is not used to track carefully the progress of different groups of pupils or to challenge teachers about the progress they make. The headteacher provides governors with a good range of information about standards and achievement, and some visit regularly. Improvements made in raising standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and the recent rise in pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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	3

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	2
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	3

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

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

3 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of North Leverton CofE Primary School, Retford, NG22 0AD

Thank you for making my recent visit to your school such a pleasant experience. I enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your books, and talking to you and some of your parents. I was pleased to see how happy you are and to hear how much you enjoy coming to school. The teachers and other adults look after you well. They are kind and helpful and want you all to do your best. I was particularly pleased to see how well most of you behaved. Well done!

You are making satisfactory progress, but some of you could achieve more. I have asked the headteacher to ensure that the work you are given is matched very carefully to your abilities in all lessons and that you know the next step to improve your learning. I was pleased to see that the teachers take time to mark your books and give you targets for improvement. I have asked the teachers to make sure that their marking and the targets set help you to make even better progress. Your teachers work hard and keep very detailed information about the progress you are making. Often, the teachers help each other to improve their teaching so that you learn more, especially in your literacy and numeracy. I have asked those teachers with responsibility in school to use all the information they can to make sure that your lessons get even better and your progress continues to improve, especially in English, mathematics and science. You can help by continuing to behave well and working hard.

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

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers Her Majesty's Inspector