

Gunthorpe CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122803
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	314407
Inspection date	30 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Aldridge

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 aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	91
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	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Lee Slack
Headteacher	Mr Martin Armitage
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Dauids Lane Gunthorpe Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG14 7EW
Telephone number	0115 966 3481
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: children's knowledge and skills on entry to the school, the progress made by pupils, the quality of governance and monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. The concerns expressed by a small number of parents were also followed up. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher and staff, parents, the pupils and a governor. The school's assessment information and documentation were scrutinised and observations made of teaching and other activities during the day. Other aspects were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found limited evidence 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 the report.

Description of the school

This small school serves the villages of Gunthorpe and Caythorpe. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased. Currently, there are pupils who have autism or who are deaf. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes those in Reception who enter the school in the September before they are five. These children are in the same class as pupils in Years 1 and 2. Following the closure of a local playgroup, the school has established provision for three-year-olds, who attend part-time for one or more afternoons each week. The school is a member of a partnership of schools, known as the Fosse Five.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gunthorpe CofE Primary is a good school, which is how it sees itself. Its evaluation of the quality of its work is occasionally over generous, but because it accurately diagnoses strengths and areas for improvement, and takes suitable action to strengthen provision, there has been good improvement since the last inspection and it has a good capacity to improve further.

The knowledge and skills of the small numbers of children entering the EYFS vary considerably from year to year. Children soon settle in and they make a good start to their education here. Parents attribute this to the quality of the care and education provided by the approachable staff. Pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well, whatever their starting points. Almost all of them thoroughly enjoy school. They find their lessons great fun, because teachers link subjects together into topics that make learning interesting and meaningful. During the inspection, for instance, pupils were conducting a scientific investigation to find out how best to make a mummy as part of their topic on Ancient Egypt. Visits help to bring learning to life as well as adding enjoyment.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan carefully to make sure that pupils of all ages and abilities are well catered for. Staff keep a close eye on the progress pupils are making and quickly identify any who are not making the progress expected of them. Skilled teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who need additional help, both in classes and when teaching small groups of pupils who need a more individual approach. Additional programmes are used effectively to give those pupils that need it an extra boost.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good too, and these contribute to the progress that they make. They are attentive and listen to one another as well as to staff and, consequently, they learn much from each other. They also know exactly what their targets are and find teachers' marking helps them to improve their work. As a result of the good progress that pupils make, the success with which they develop enterprise skills and the ability to work collaboratively, they are well prepared for secondary education.

Standards by Year 6 vary in line with the differing abilities of the small year groups. In the last few years standards have been average. Currently, they are above average, and they were above average in July 2008 in English, mathematics and science. Staff have worked hard and successfully to increase rates of progress in writing and recognise that this work needs to continue to close the gap between reading and writing standards. Pupils achieve best in reading. In July 2008, standards in reading were well above average in Year 2, although overall standards in this year group were above average.

Pupils' personal development is good. Behaviour and attendance are both good. Daily assemblies provide suitable opportunities for pupils to consider Christian values, such as kindness, and also offer opportunities for reflection and prayer. A wide range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities as well as daily 'activate' sessions and many opportunities to learn about how to keep healthy lead to most pupils eating sensibly at school and taking plenty of exercise. Partnerships with others, including the Fosse Five group of schools, help to extend the range of opportunities on offer and take-up is good. Excellent enrichment of the curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to socialise, learn about others' customs and cultures, and develop skills and interests. From Reception to Year 6, all learn French, and all have the chance to learn music through playing an instrument. There are good opportunities for pupils to take

responsibilities in school and they do so willingly. The school council is active in securing improvements to school meals, which are nutritious and healthy. Pupils show concern for others by raising funds for charities. The school involves organisations in the local community to help raise pupils' awareness of safety and pupils know well how to keep themselves safe. Almost all pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they would turn to an adult if they had a problem. Because a small number of parents wrote of their concerns about bullying, inspectors investigated this. Pupils say that there is occasional bullying, although not all are clear about the difference between disagreements and bullying. The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy and follows the correct procedures. Pupils generally find that incidents are dealt with effectively.

Overall, the school is well led and managed and the great majority of parents are pleased with the provision that it makes for their children. One aptly described it is a 'well run village school'. The headteacher recognises that the school's ethos does not strongly reflect that of a church school and the school's development plan includes this as a priority. Increased opportunities for pupils to develop self-awareness and deal with their emotions are being incorporated into the school day. Teachers link this work effectively to assembly themes so that pupils receive consistent messages. Parents see staff as committed and keen to improve. The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. For example, teachers and other staff strive to make the school inclusive and have had some significant successes in providing for pupils who might otherwise have attended special schools. For instance, there is strong expertise on the staff in teaching deaf pupils. External services have been involved appropriately in providing advice about the teaching of pupils with autism. In some cases, the school's work has been held up as an example of good practice to be shared within the local authority. The teaching of French is one such example. Staff work well together and are currently developing the curriculum so that it is increasingly appealing to the pupils by offering them the opportunity to influence what they learn. To ensure that all subjects are still taught as they should be, subject leaders check curricular planning and monitor pupils' gains in learning skills. Consequently, subject leaders can be confident that subjects retain their essential identity, and that standards are not slipping.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors have recently carried out an audit of their work and action to improve the quality of governance forms part of the school's development plan. They know that some parents have little awareness of who the governors are or what they do as leaders of the school. At present, the governing body is short of two members, and almost all governors are currently parents or staff. The lack of impartial views from outside the school contributes to a lack of confidence on the part of a small number of parents in the ability of the governors to hold the school to account. Through their visits to the school, governors do check first hand on its work and they ensure that statutory requirements are met.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in all areas of learning. They behave well and get on with others whether in a small group of children of a similar age or in the larger mixed-age class. They concentrate very well, often for extended periods, but sometimes lack confidence in working independently and making choices. Children's rates of progress are improving, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Their good progress is linked to the introduction of daily lessons in letters and sounds for all. Teaching is consistently good, and children are cared for sensitively. Assessment information is used well to tailor provision to the learning and

personal needs of each child. The outdoor areas are used well, particularly to give children the freedom to explore and to be physically active. The EYFS leader brings great energy and enthusiasm to her role. She has a clear grasp of exactly where improvements are needed, and works effectively to continually refine provision and improve rates of progress. For example, she is aware that there is a need to widen the range of resources available in each area of learning to provide further encouragement to children to become more confident in working independently. Communication with parents is good and many parents make an important contribution to their children's progress in language by supporting learning at home. The school has responded to local needs by establishing suitable part-time provision for children under five, as well as a weekly mother and toddler group. This provision was not a focus for the inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase further pupils' rates of progress in writing to close the gap between standards in reading and writing
- Increase parental confidence in the ability of the governors to hold the school to account.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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	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	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

1 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gunthorpe CofE Primary, Nottingham, NG14 7EW

Thank you for making us welcome in your school, especially to those who gave up part of playtime to talk to us about school life. We enjoyed our visit. We came to see how well you are all getting on and find out whether there are any ways in which the school could be improved.

We agree with the staff that yours is a good school. Almost all of you really enjoy coming and find learning enjoyable and interesting. We could see how much fun you were having in your lessons. Good teaching helps you to learn successfully. We were impressed with how well you know your targets and become absorbed in your work. You are well prepared for secondary school by the end of Year 6 because you make good progress and learn to work well with others. We were pleased to hear that almost all pupils feel safe in school. You certainly know how to keep yourselves safe. We saw that you make sensible choices, eating healthy snacks and lunches at school. You also take plenty of exercise and you and your parents appreciate all the opportunities you have to take part in different sports after the school day. Through the school council, you are making suggestions about what should be done and helping to improve the school. You all have jobs to do in school and you show that you are concerned for others when you organise events and raise funds for charities.

We have asked the staff to do two main things. At present you do not do quite as well in writing as you do in reading, and the school is going to continue with the work it has started to improve your writing skills. There are not as many school governors as there should be, so they are going to find some more who are not parents or staff at the school. The governors are going to make sure that all your parents know who the governors are and what they do. They will also make sure that if your parents are concerned about something at the school they can tell the governors about it.

You can help by making an extra effort to be kind to one another so that all pupils feel safe and are happy at your school.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aldridge

Lead inspector